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## Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "The involvement of the United Nations system in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance" (JIU/REP/95/9).

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Annex

# THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN PROVIDING AND COORDINATING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

*Prepared by*

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**Joint Inspection Unit**

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CONTENTS


| | | Paragraphs | Pages |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Acronyms | | v |
| | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | | vi |
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 1 - 12 | 1 |
| II. | THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AGENCIES | 13 - 54 | 4 |
| | A. Organizational structures at Headquarters and in the field | 14 - 36 | 4 |
| | B. Mandates | 37 - 42 | 9 |
| | C. Joint and bilateral agreements | 43 - 54 | 10 |
| III. | PROBLEMS AND IMPROVEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM COORDINATION MECHANISMS AT HEADQUARTERS AND IN THE FIELD | 55 - 165 | 13 |
| | A. Overall coordination agencies | 59 - 72 | 13 |
| | 1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs | 60 - 70 | 14 |
| | 2. The United Nations Development Programme | 71 - 72 | 21 |
| | B. Major coordination mechanisms for natural and complex emergencies | 73 - 107 | 21 |
| | 1. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee | 79 - 86 | 23 |
| | 2. The Consolidated Appeal Process | 87 - 101 | 25 |
| | 3. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund | 102 - 104 | 28 |
| | 4. Other coordination mechanisms | 105 - 107 | 29 |
| | C. Field operations | 108 - 153 | 30 |
| | 1. Field coordination structures | 111 - 117 | 30 |
| | 2. Leadership | 118 - 131 | 32 |
| | 3. Stand-by-human resources available to DHA | 132 - 144 | 37 |
| | 4. Peace-keeping forces as stand-by for humanitarian assistance | 145 - 148 | 40 |
| | 5. NGOs and local structures as alternatives to militarisation | 149 - 153 | 41 |
| | D. Actions needed | 154 - 165 | 42 |
| IV. | PLANNING AND PREVENTION NEEDS | 166 - 203 | 45 |
| | A. Emergency reduction and mitigation | 169 - 177 | 45 |
| | B. Early-warning and early response | 178 - 191 | 47 |
| | 1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs | 181 - 184 | 48 |
| | 2. Other United Nations system agencies and programmes | 185 - 191 | 49 |

| | | Paragraphs | Pages |
|---|---|---|---|
| C. | Information systems | 192 - 203 | 50 |
| | 1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs | 193 - 197 | 50 |
| | 2. Other United Nations system agencies | 198 - 203 | 51 |
| V. | FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS | 204 - 242 | 53 |
| A. | Financial resources | 213 - 228 | 54 |
| B. | Administrative procedures | 229 - 242 | 57 |
| VI. | LESSONS LEARNED | 243 - 261 | 60 |
| A. | Effective operational frameworks | 245 - 249 | 60 |
| B. | The relief to development continuum and agencies' strengths | 250 - 261 | 62 |
| Annex I. | The Department of Humanitarian Affairs Organigramme | | 65 |
| Annex II. | The Department of Political Affairs Organigramme | | 66 |
| Annex III. | The Department of Peace-keeping Operations Organigramme | | 67 |
| Notes | | | 68 |
| List of basic instruments and other documents of the United Nations system concerning humanitarian assistance | | | 75 |

## ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACC | Administrative Committee on Coordination |
| CAP | Consolidated Appeal Process |
| CERF | Central Emergency Revolving Fund |
| CCPOQ | Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions |
| DHA | Department of Humanitarian Affairs |
| DMTP | Disaster Management Training Programme |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| IASC | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| IASC-WG | Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group |
| IASU | Inter-Agency Support Unit |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Persons |
| IDNDR | International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction |
| IEFR | International Emergency Food Reserve |
| IFRCS | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| IGOs | Inter-governmental Organisations |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| JCGP | Joint Consultative Group on Policy |
| JIU | Joint Inspection Unit |
| MCDA | Military and Civil Defence Assets |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| OSOCC | On-Site Operations Coordination Centre |
| OUNS | Office of the United Nations System Support Services |
| QIPs | Quick Impact Projects |
| UNCHS-Habitat | United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat) |
| UN-DMT | United Nations Disaster Management Team |
| UNDAC | United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commisioner for Refugees, Office of the |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNOCHA | The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan |
| UNOG | United Nations Office at Geneva |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| UNV | United Nations Volunteers Programme |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United Nations system, with its many organizations and agencies with different constituencies and governed by decisions of Member States, is very complicated. Often decisions taken in one governing body differ from those taken in another. Member States may push for contradictory decisions in different forums. Coherence in the requests to the United Nations, its operational programmes and the special agencies does not always exist. The many United Nations humanitarian assistance programmes, and their multiple implementing partners from outside the United Nations system, add to the complexity. The proliferation of relief actors, the inconsistencies of donor responses, disconnected bilateralism (when added to the uncertain boundaries of humanitarian assistance), and the scarcity of resources are all part of the environment faced by the international relief network.

Consolidating the emergency relief functions of the United Nations into a single operational organization might be ideal. This notion, while not a new one, found echo in ECOSOC discussions in June 1995, where a call was made to review further the possible integration of some of the United Nations relief activities. This would eliminate the problems arising from uncomplementary and overlapping agency mandates, inter-agency rivalry, and excessive autonomy of the operational agencies. However, this solution may well be far-fetched for several reasons. Other than the usual range of opinions both between and within governments, agencies with dual mandates, consider that it would be difficult to reconcile relief and development functions without sacrificing one or the other, were the concept of a single relief agency to be considered. It is also not clear that governments are firmly committed to such a far-reaching structural change or to a fully-unified United Nations response.

Despite the absence of any single humanitarian organization, there is a strong awareness that coordination within the United Nations system and between the System and other participants is integral to effective humanitarian relief and assistance both in natural and man-made emergencies. Efforts to cooperate among the various United Nations system agencies, negotiating forums, and headquarters staff, and between these and various non-governmental and international organizations, continue to develop and function, often surprisingly well. This is due, on the one hand, to the considerable operational experience of the relief agencies in the field and, on the other, to the appropriate coordination tools that the United Nations has made available, which should be further reinforced and strengthened.

Similarly, the role of the coordinator and the linkages between the operational agencies, should be more fully defined and consequently strengthened. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has to coordinate by facilitating the efforts of other agencies to carry out what they know and do best within a holistic approach. Its principal role is to organize the activities of the various elements of the relief network without becoming operational itself, help agencies avoid unnecessary duplication and overlap, and suggest cost-effective solutions whenever necessary. An active facilitating role assumes that form would follow function, so that effective facilitation would result in a greater willingness to accept coordination and the coordinator's leadership.

This Joint Inspection Unit report analyzes the progress, problems, mechanisms and capacity of the United Nations system to provide and coordinate humanitarian assistance. It is based on extensive questionnaire data, other documentation, and discussions with responsible officials throughout the United Nations system, in order to identify areas where humanitarian operations, and particularly complex emergencies, can further be improved.

The policy and operational-level recommendations which follow are provided within the context of the coordination mechanisms or structures already available to and in the United Nations system.

**RECOMMENDATION 1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee arrangements, and executive heads and governing bodies of the concerned United Nations agencies, should adopt a global policy agreement with common strategies and clearly defined objectives for humanitarian assistance programmes. There should be a shift from the fragmented approach and reaction to emergencies and disconnected bilateral agreements, towards a global policy agreement, which would consider mechanisms and modalities which enhance the agencies' capacity to work together and bind them to agreements on relative roles, allowing for an automatic and predictable response by all agencies concerned. (paragraphs 43-54)**

The relationship between humanitarian law and humanitarian assistance is very strong. Greater attention to humanitarian imperatives can therefore pay significant dividends. The importance of providing adequate humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees is a particularly vivid example of this connection. Large movements of displaced persons and refugees can place extreme pressures on receiving communities, creating dangerous tensions. The stability of entire regions can rapidly be threatened and undermined. The humanitarian dimension of conflict prevention is also evident in the link between conflict prevention and respect for human rights and other principles and rules of humanitarian law.

The biggest coordination issue facing the humanitarian assistance community involves complex emergencies which mix political and conflictual elements that lead to mass population displacements and restrictions on access to emergency-affected peoples. However, regardless of the type of emergency, humanitarian assistance should remain neutral, impartial, emergency-relief-specific, and time bound. While primary responsibility in the case of natural disasters remains with the governments themselves, in complex emergencies humanitarian assistance by the United Nations system should be provided in conjunction with alternative indigenous governing structures, non-governmental and/or inter-governmental agencies, and organized national civilian structures. This would allow United Nations agencies, once involved, to respond more flexibly to emergency humanitarian needs and to enhance indigenous coping mechanisms and hence increase self-reliance.

**RECOMMENDATION 2. United Nations system relief agencies should develop humanitarian assistance frameworks that incorporate and enhance indigenous coping mechanisms in complex emergencies. In countries where there is partial or total collapse of central authority, or where conditions of war exist, the System relief agencies should use, as much as possible, the national services and service-related community and governing structures available, such as hospitals, clinics, schools, and agricultural services. Educational, health and agricultural inputs, which were previously defined as non-emergency, should be recognized as critical to the long-term survival and recovery of affected communities during emergencies. (paragraphs 132-153)**

Existing mechanisms for providing operational assistance, in natural disasters should also be used in man-made and complex emergencies. The gap between the two should be narrowed, as much as possible, to establish common operational aspects including the

assessment of needs, consolidated appeals, stand-by capacity for rapid mobilization of relief operations, and ongoing projects for rehabilitation and prevention.

**RECOMMENDATION 3. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should accelerate procedures to increase the participation of the organized civilian component in complex emergencies. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is well on its way to establishing final guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets in disaster relief and complex emergencies, including trained civilian and unarmed support in relief services, public works, communications, transport, health, emergency medical services, and search and rescue. (paragraphs 139-144 and 229-242)**

**RECOMMENDATION 4. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should increase lateral cooperation with other coordination mechanisms of the System, including the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. It should also increase lateral participation and coordination with the Office of the United Nations System Support Services, the Department of Administration and Management, Office of Human Resources Management, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Public Information, and with other relevant departments of the specialised agencies. This lateral cooperation should be used to address policy deficiencies and speed the decision-making process. (paragraphs 73-107 and 105-110 and 154-165)**

**RECOMMENDATION 5. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in its coordination role, should increase its efforts to establish planning frameworks for relief operations for both natural and complex emergencies before an emergency in the field occurs, to include at least the following: (paragraphs 154- 165, 166-203 and 243-261)**

**(a) Planning for the initial strengthening of field-based support mechanisms in the office of the Resident Coordinator and gradual commensurate strengthening of country-level capacities to respond to the emerging situation;**

**(b) Focusing on issues of common concern by building on and encouraging initiatives already undertaken at a bilateral level between agencies, which should be continuously reviewed and updated;**

**(c) Establishing formal and binding logistic coordination arrangements between agencies, to include inter-agency support and cost-sharing responsibilities;**

**(d) Adopting clear, situation-specific division of labour according to the particular needs of the emergency and the respective capacities of the agencies to address relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction measures;**

**(e) Systematically extracting successful and unsuccessful relief operation frameworks as lessons learned for future natural disasters and complex emergencies.**

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a global mandate for coordination. A competent and efficient field structure is also essential. It should be supported by clearly defined responsibilities and the required level of back-stopping from all administrative parts of the United Nations system. These two elements, which are central to coordination responsibilities, depend fundamentally upon the availability of a solid infrastructure and the provision of adequate financial resources (in the long term) from the donor community.

**RECOMMENDATION 6. The organizations of the United Nations system should increase efforts to tighten field coordination, including at least the following: (paragraphs 108-153, 118-131 and 154- 165)**

**(a) Roles and functions of the main coordinators and sub-coordinators in the field have to be clearly defined and implemented. The presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, whenever peace-keeping contingents are concerned, raises additional authority, coordination and reporting issues.**

**(b) Emergency teams and managers in ongoing operations should be given more delegated authority. Field coordinators in charge should have signature authority for funds up to a certain percentage of the total field coordination budget.**

**(c) Information on resource availability and pipeline should be made available to the field to allow responsible decisions to be taken. The urgent ground-level decisions should receive limited second guessing by Headquarters. Whether the Resident Coordinator, or the Humanitarian Coordinator is placed in charge, he/she should be the best qualified for managing the different emergency situations. Once given executive authority, he/she should also be held accountable.**

**(d) The role and office of the Resident Coordinator should continue to be reinforced through disaster management training - which has begun with the Disaster Management Training Programme.**

**(e) More resources should be allocated to the Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, and to emergency telecommunications equipment and its use to respond to sudden emergencies.**

**RECOMMENDATION 7. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should improve its guidelines for the Consolidated Appeal Process (which was envisaged as a mechanism to promote integrated needs assessments and resource mobilization, provide access to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, and encourage more inter-agency cooperation). Agencies who do not participate in the Consolidated Appeal Process should be discouraged from receiving access to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and should be held responsible for projections made as to their requirements. The document itself should introduce greater prioritization and realistic demands and possibly increase its appeals for non-food sectors, rehabilitation and development activities. Moreover, this should be established and managed in**

**an accessible database, which can then be sent to the relevant donors and governments via electronic means to short-cut delays in response. (paragraphs 87-101 and 154-165 and 206-208)**

**RECOMMENDATION 8. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should create a workshop composed of experts from all the participating relief departments of United Nations system agencies and non-governmental agencies. It should be convened at least twice a year to assess the status and progress of all humanitarian assistance operations under way. Round-table meetings and coordination fora should also be held intermittently with national governments to discuss and reconsider priority issues for relief assistance measures, under the conditions prevailing at that time. (paragraphs 165 and 154-165)**

Flexibility, rapid response and efficiency are necessary to save lives in emergencies, and humanitarian agencies have developed their own Rapid Response Teams. Based on lessons learned, rules and procedures should be adapted to meet rapid response requirements, together with appropriate safeguards to ensure accountability. It should become easier, for example, to recruit staff, purchase emergency related equipment, authorize certain staff members to have access to cash for urgent needs, and field rapid response teams. Funding mechanisms also require more flexibility, and donor agreement to institute changes to existing arrangements. Priorities should include emphasis on in-country coordination, which remains the weakest area in spite of substantial progress in coordination at the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and subsidiary body level.

**RECOMMENDATION 9. Each organization should urgently act, within the framework of its mandate, to further streamline administrative measures which would provide rapid field response. (paragraphs 204-242) These should include:**

**(a) Greater flexibility and speed in United Nations financial and related procurement and contracting rules, which would switch into an "emergency mode" when the need arises;**

**(b) Greater flexibility in the United Nations emergency procedures for rapid staff deployment (from stand-by rosters) and for issuing contracts for establishing local contract committees and local purchase;**

**(c) Improved and simpler procedures for the release of emergency stockpiles;**

**(d) Improved stand-by rosters of trained human resources to fill pre-established posts;**

**(e) Increased availability and creation of stand-by military airlift capacity;**

**(f) Increased use of telecommunications such as electronic mail for more rapid communication and the removal of regulatory barriers.**

The ability to identify early warning signs of catastrophe and share them with decision-making bodies is integral to disaster and overall emergency mitigation. Each United Nations system organization active in humanitarian relief has realized the importance of information systems and of early warning signs. While each may create information databases or systems to suit their needs, there is, in certain cases, inter-agency reluctance and mistrust about sharing information rapidly and efficiently.

Ensuring adequate information flow and close regular consultations between United Nations departments and programmes and system agencies, non-governmental organizations, and donors through regular briefings, inter-departmental meetings and continued inter-agency meetings, is fundamental to better cooperation within the United Nations system. Providing a universal information network which would utilize state-of-the-art technology would also help provide substantive information in an action-oriented response as would an early warning universal system. If, however, there is no political will to take urgent and necessary action, the effectiveness of early warning systems is limited.

**RECOMMENDATION 10. The Secretary-General should establish an Inter-Agency early warning centre, which would have access to all early-warning information available throughout the United Nations system as a means to alert decision makers and mobilize an early response. The Humanitarian Early Warning System or HEWS is an important step in that direction which should be a central element of such an early-warning centre. (paragraphs 178-191 and 192-203)**

**RECOMMENDATION 11. Coordination is essential, particularly where multiple partners and peace-keeping operations are involved in the field, and should be administered by consensus. This coordination should provide support role and back-stopping to the operational agencies as they perform their functions according to an identified and agreed-upon distribution of labour. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should retain and strengthen its coordination role, but not overlap with operational agencies despite lacunae in mandates. (paragraphs 9, 55-59 and 154-165)**

Finally, if the international community truly expects the United Nations system to play a more effective role in providing relief assistance, then it should provide adequate resources for this purpose. Committed financial and resource backing from United Nations Headquarters to any of the relief organizations is also essential for the survival of focal coordination units in the field and for operations management. Humanitarian assistance - as well as peace-keeping, should not be mobilized unless the objectives have been clarified and sufficient resources have been assured.

**RECOMMENDATION 12. Member Governments might wish to reconsider increasing the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) by an additional US $30 million, for rehabilitation and transitional phases of relief operations. The use of the Fund should then be determined by the needs of the crisis and made available to agencies with otherwise limited resources, and which need the funds to perform the functions assigned to them. United Nations system agencies should further be encouraged to raise money for the CERF which should also be open to private and non-governmental donors. (paragraphs 102-104 and 204-211)**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*"Since December 1988, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/131 on humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the notion of a right to humanitarian assistance has, to a certain extent, become one of the areas in which human rights can actually be guaranteed.*

*We have seen this reflected in the Organization's operations in the Sudan, in Somalia, in the special case of Iraq and, today in the former Yugoslavia."*

*--Excerpt from Secretary-General's Statement made at the opening of the World Conference on Human Rights on 14 June 1993.*[1]

1. The United Nations deals in one way or another with virtually every aspect of the human condition: human rights, environment, world peace, and sustainable development. It is not surprising that it has become heavily involved in humanitarian assistance and emergency relief, both in natural and man-made situations, and in connection with peace-keeping or peace-building operations of various kinds. This is partly due to the fact that there has been a large increase in the number of emergency situations in the world, both natural and man-made. The Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies foresee that between now and the year 2000 about 200 to 500 million people will be affected every year by natural and man-made disasters.[2]

2. The increase in the number of emergencies is further magnified by their scope. International relief assistance covers material, personnel and services provided by the international community to a receiving state to meet the needs of those affected by a disaster.[3] Humanitarian assistance, as described by General Assembly resolution 46/182[4] commits the international community to observing that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and affirms that international assistance has a long term preventive as well as relief function. In particular, it states that emergency assistance should be provided in ways that will support recovery and long-term development. "Relief assistance includes all actions necessary to grant and facilitate movement over the territory, including the territorial waters and the airspace of a Transit State. It is exclusively humanitarian and impartial in character. It is based on the respect of the principle of the sovereignty of States and is executed without discrimination of any kind based on race, colour, sex, language or political or religious convictions."[5]

3. However, a new type of complex emergencies has flared up since the collapse of the cold war. These complex emergencies are characterized by multiple causes and involve newer major problems and needs such as demobilisation and demining, or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). [Internally Displaced Persons are people who have left their homes but remain in their country of origin.[6] The IDPs are now more numerous than refugees, according to UNHCR.]

4. A complex emergency can stem from a variety of causes such as natural disaster, socio-economic factors, civil conflict or war. It affects a broad mixture of population groups in their country of origin. Characteristics of complex emergencies include:

(a) They involve a large number of civilian casualties, populations who are besieged or displaced quickly and in large numbers, and/or human suffering of major proportion;

(b) Delivery of humanitarian assistance is seriously impeded, delayed, or prevented by politically or conflict motivated constraints;

(c) A significant proportion of the affected population is prevented from carrying out normal social, political, and economic activity, or can only do so at high risk;

(d) Relief workers encounter high security risks in providing humanitarian assistance;

(e) The international and cross-border dimensions are characterized by political differences between those concerned.[7]

5. These multiple ingredients are paralleled by new options available to the international community for responding to such crises. Many United Nations relief efforts and a staggering number of organizations are attempting to respond to these urgent crises and changing world circumstances. They include more than a dozen United Nations agencies, regional organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for African Unity (OAU), several dozen donor governments, their individual militaries, and an estimated 16,000 non-governmental organizations.[8]

6. In their response, the United Nations system and relief agencies have been forced to redefine their intervention. According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), United Nations humanitarian assistance covers complex and major emergencies.[9] An emergency which falls clearly within the overall competence and capacity of a single United Nations agency, such as a health epidemic, even though it may necessitate intervention by various other United Nations agencies, should not be treated as a complex emergency unless the Inter-Agency Standing Committee considers it as such. United Nations system agencies have also been forced to expand their mandates beyond the principles of non-intervention due to the increased number of civil wars, and host governments' shrinking power. For example, in the past five years, organizations such as UNHCR have had to move far beyond their original goals of providing protection and assistance to refugees. When a million Rwandans fled into Zaire within four days, for example, UNHCR found itself required to fill a void by assisting other agencies and non-governmental organizations to run the airport, provide clean water, organize medical care and bury the dead.

7. Although there are many humanitarian assistance participants, their efforts are still not equal to the task. Since they have all been actively deploying funds and human resources to emergency areas (a) without a clear idea of whether humanitarian and peace-making missions should be separated or better integrated, (b) without tested military doctrine, and (c) usually with limited coordination, it is perhaps a miracle that the results have not been worse.[10] Moreover, the increased demands and options for response have not been met with the necessary financial resources. The United Nations has long had serious funding shortfalls and arrears, both in its regular budget and in the budgets of peace keeping operations.[11] The international community faces many more international security and humanitarian relief problems than there are apparent resources available to respond to them.[12]

8. In view of the daunting complexity and challenges, coordination remains the key. The United Nations system has already improved and continues to improve its humanitarian assistance programmes and activities and the coordination thereof. To complement these efforts, the Joint Inspection Unit decided to make its contribution by preparing this report. It focuses on recent developments and the potential for further improvement in coordinating

international humanitarian assistance in cases of natural disaster and particularly complex emergencies.

9. Coordination is understood to be "the intelligent sharing of information and the frank, constructive discussion of issues and possible courses of action; achievement of consensus on objectives and on overall strategy; and the voluntary adoption by those concerned of specific responsibilities and tasks in the context of agreed objectives and strategy."[13] Coordination more specifically is looked upon as "the systematic utilization of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include: strategic planning; gathering data and managing information; mobilizing resources and assuring accountability; orchestrating a functional division of labour in the field; negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership."[14]

10. This report concentrates primarily on emergency response considerations and the overall capacity of the United Nations system to provide and coordinate humanitarian assistance. It analyzes mandates, roles and responsibilities, organizational structures, budgetary provisions, methods of cooperation, and a number of operational aspects of the United Nations system entities involved. Peace-keeping operations in the field are not directly addressed but are implicit in the discussions, in order to avoid duplication with the recent JIU report "Investigation of the Relationship between Humanitarian Assistance and Peace-keeping Operations." (JIU/REP/95/6).

11. The main objectives of this report are to assess: (a) the progress and problems of the United Nations system's coordination mechanisms and standby capacity for humanitarian response; (b) its operational and organizational mechanisms; (c) its planning and preparedness techniques for handling complex emergencies; and (d) major areas where humanitarian operations can be further improved. Chapter II covers the humanitarian response agencies, in general. Chapter III covers more in depth the coordination mechanisms available to the United Nations system. Chapter IV stresses planning and prevention needs. Chapter V notes financial and administrative constraints, and Chapter VI reviews the importance of lessons learned and general operational frameworks within a relief-to-development continuum.

12. The findings of the report and its conclusions and recommendations are largely based on responses to an extensive questionnaire sent out to the major United Nations system organizations involved in humanitarian assistance programmes. The Inspector also reviewed extensive documentation and interviewed responsible officials in the above and other United Nations system agencies, as well as certain officials and organizations outside the United Nations system, to gain further insight into the possibilities for improved coordination of humanitarian assistance. She wishes to thank all concerned for the ideas and effort they contributed to this review.

## II. THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AGENCIES

13. The major humanitarian response agencies, from the United Nations system, who provide relief and assistance for natural and complex emergencies and who maintain at least some degree of field presence are the following:

| **Humanitarian response agencies** |
|---|
| - Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)<br>- Department of Political Affairs (DPA)<br>- Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO)<br>- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)<br>- International Labour Organization (ILO)<br>- International Organization for Migration (IOM)<br>- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)<br>- United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat)<br>- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<br>- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)<br>- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)<br>- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)<br>- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)<br>- United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV)<br>- World Food Programme (WFP)<br>- World Health Organization (WHO)<br>- World Meteorological Organization (WMO) |

### A. Organizational structures at Headquarters and in the field

14. Most of the operational organizations for humanitarian affairs have recently restructured their activities to be better able to respond to natural and complex emergencies. FAO, for example, has strengthened the operation of its Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), and has established an Emergency Coordination Group (ECG) to coordinate the Organization's response to emergency situations. UNHCR has established additional mechanisms during the past three years to increase the efficiency of its emergency response, including rapid deployment teams and stand-by arrangements with external NGO partners to increase its staffing and programme delivery capacity. UNESCO, which cooperates closely with UNICEF and UNHCR in the provision of education to affected populations, introduced a duty officer scheme at Headquarters in 1995 to allow communications about an emergency to reach the Secretariat during non-working hours. UNICEF has also strengthened its emergency management structures in New York and in Geneva and has established Rapid Response Teams and enhanced its staff capacity in regional offices in Africa. The WHO Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance and

Emergencies has led to the establishment of the division of Emergency Relief Operations (ERO). Even the IOM, a new participant, promises to provide rapid, targeted and accurate information on migratory flows in view to preventing humanitarian emergencies wherever possible.[15]

15. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). DHA is the United Nations entity charged with ensuring the effective coordination of United Nations system humanitarian assistance and with promoting actions to prevent, or at least mitigate, the effects of natural as well as complex or man-made disasters, as stipulated in General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 46/219.[16]

16. DHA has two offices, with one handling complex emergencies and the other natural disasters, with relative sub-units in the opposite Offices. The New York Office and also Headquarters, with one-third of the total staff, handles policy coordination, policy planning and early-warning functions and works with the deliberative organs of the United Nations and with the political, financial and economic departments of the Secretariat.[17] The Complex Emergency Division in New York has a new desk structure focused on conflict situations and affected countries. A Rapid Response Unit (RRU) for Complex Emergencies has also been created to support the immediate re-deployment of DHA coordinating teams. It is designed to strengthen standby mechanisms for complex emergencies similar to those established for natural disasters, and provides the Resident Coordinator and/or the Humanitarian Coordinator, in-country, with the necessary staff, logistics, and other support during the crucial initial emergency response phase.

17. Another new unit in DHA New York is the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit, established to carry out DHA's function as focal point, as identified in General Assembly Resolution 49/215. The Unit is tasked to articulate and promote consistent United Nations policies to address the global land-mine crisis, including advocacy for an effective ban on the utilization of land mines; to formulate United Nations mine-action programmes, and provide support for the implementation of these programmes; and to manage the Voluntary Trust Fund and Assistance in Mine Clearance and other resources made available through the Department for mine action activities including a standby capacity for mine clearance.

18. The Geneva office acts as the focal point for emergency relief support and relief coordination as well as for disaster mitigation and coordinates the United Nations system response to all natural disasters. Its Disaster Reduction Division (DRD) consists of two parts. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) secretariat has a promotional and facilitating role and provides substantive and secretariat support to entities linked to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999). It aims to create widespread public and policy acceptance of the culture of resource protection through risk reduction and to develop the necessary capacities at the national and local levels to reduce disaster risks. The Disaster Mitigation Branch (DMB) focuses most of its activities on providing technical assistance to countries in identification, formulation and implementation of disaster reduction policies and action programmes. This support takes place in the form of advisory services, group training, seminars, workshops and fellowships, and field projects. DHA has also established, through its Relief Coordination Branch (RCB) in Geneva, an international emergency response which also covers environmental aspects including industrial accidents.

19. DHA, in both New York and Geneva, chairs inter-agency working groups and consultative meetings relating to specific emergencies and coordinates its activities among

United Nations agencies and programmes and with the Permanent Missions of donor countries. It also prepares periodic situation and financial reports; undertakes resources mobilization efforts; administers voluntary contributions and matching funds channelled through the United Nations Escrow Account for humanitarian assistance purposes, for both United Nations agencies and NGOs; and provides operational and administrative back-stopping for field activities. (See Annex I, organigramme on DHA.)

20. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is the political arm of the Secretary-General in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and the control and resolution of conflicts within States. As such, it advises the Secretary-General on policy in these areas and is responsible for political research and analysis. It also has executive responsibilities in preventive diplomacy and peace-making.[19] It participates in Inter-Departmental Working groups on individual operations or countries and presides on the IASC. (See Annex II, organigramme on DPA.)

21. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) is, on the other hand, the operational arm of the Secretary-General for all United Nations field operations, in particular for the day-to-day management of peace-keeping forces and observers. It acts as the main political channel of communication between United Nations Headquarters and the field.[19] The Department follows command and control aspects related to peace-keeping, as defined by the Secretary-General in his supplement to ar. Agenda for Peace.[20] It identifies three levels of authority: overall political direction which belongs to the Security Council; executive direction and command for which the Secretary-General is responsible; and command in the field, which is entrusted by the Secretary-General to the Chief of Mission, or Force Commander/Chief Military Observer).

22. Military support for humanitarian activities, mobilized through DPKO, normally includes some or all of the following services: (a) security of convoys and personnel; (b) reaction forces to assist humanitarian personnel; (c) access to military controlled facilities in order to conduct official business, i.e., ports, airfields, staging areas; (d) communications support; (e) use of transportation assets; (f) medical evacuation and medical facility use; (g) emergency infrastructure repairs; and (h) information on security, political and logistic matters. (See Annex III, organigramme on DPKO.)

23. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). FAO's Emergency Coordination Group (ECG) coordinates the Organization's response to emergency situations and subsequent relief and rehabilitation. This Group includes the GIEWS, responsible for early warning and assessment of potential food problems worldwide, and the Office of Special Relief Operations (OSRO), which is in charge of the assessment of agricultural relief/rehabilitation needs and implementation of agricultural rehabilitation projects. The ECG is also involved in coordinating fund-raising activities when necessary, and in assessing the need for special administrative procedures for complex emergencies.

24. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP emergency capacity is structured around three areas: its national development programmes in prevention and mitigation, its support to coordination of relief activities, and its support to national efforts for recovery and rehabilitation. The Emergency Response Division is the focal point for emergency-related policy, funding and training matters as well as in-house and external coordination. Regional bureaux, each with emergency focal points, provide operational guidance and support to country offices. The country offices have considerable programme, administrative and financial authority to react to an emerging crisis.[21]

25. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO has an Emergency Operations Unit which coordinates the Agency's work in emergencies. Focal points within the Secretariat and in field offices are designated for specific operations. Both the Unit and the focal points report directly to the Director-General or the Assistant Director-General. UNESCO has taken steps to simplify its administrative and financial procedures for emergency situations.[22]

26. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR's structure reflects its field oriented mandate. Operational planning is done at the field level in close consultation with Headquarters. At Headquarters there are the Regional Bureaux, and in the field, the Branch Offices, Missions, Liaison Offices, Sub and Field Offices. There are five Regional Bureaux and four support divisions at Headquarters in Geneva for assistance and protection policy.[23] The UNHCR Director of Policy Planning and Operations - a new post created in the Executive Office of the High Commissioner - exercises overall supervision of the Regional Bureaux, focusing on policy planning, major emergencies and operations. The Director is also the policy coordinator among the Bureaux and Divisions of International Protection and External Relations.[24]

27. UNHCR actively participates in all relevant United Nations coordination mechanisms, i.e. Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its sub-bodies, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs/Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and sub-bodies, and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) - as an observer. Focal points in the UNHCR Division of External Relations and the UNHCR New York Liaison Office handle day-to-day contacts, organizational policy and strategic issues between UNHCR and United Nations coordinating agencies, including DHA. The Director of External Relations is assisted in this function by the Senior External Relations Officer. Direct links are maintained between relevant DHA and UNHCR Desk Officers.

28. UNHCR has seconded staff to other United Nations agencies such as WFP and United Nations peace-keeping operations, and vice versa, as well as to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. It has stand-by arrangements with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and with a number of NGOs to provide staff during emergencies. UNHCR has also resorted to military and civil units in specific emergencies and has used seconded staff from these departments.

29. The Organization sees its role as supporting system-wide efforts to enhance coordination, in particular where this will lead to increased effectiveness of United Nations operations and a more comprehensive approach to the prevention and solution of refugee crises. UNHCR undertakes operation and coordination itself where refugee emergencies and refugee-related issues take place.

30. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This is a highly decentralized organization, with 80 per cent of its staff in the field. In 1993 it created an Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) as a focal point for its involvement in emergency situations. The Office performs internal liaison functions between the field offices and Headquarters divisions on policy, technical and funding requirements. It also serves as the external liaison between UNICEF emergency programmes and DHA, the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations agencies and NGOs in all aspects of emergency assistance operations.

31. A Senior Management Task Force and Security Task force, created within the above mentioned Office of Emergency Programmes, meet weekly to review and monitor policy and operational issues of complex emergencies such as staff security, Headquarters' coordination with focal points in each of the Geographical Sections of the Programme Division, and to integrate emergency programmes with regular country programmes. The Programme Funding Office provides support on fund-raising issues to the Office of Emergency Programmes in policy development and in the preparation of inter-agency appeals.

32. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA is not a global agency such as UNDP or UNICEF. Its mandate is limited to Palestinian refugees in its area of operations. It is almost completely field-based, with 94 per cent of its staff in the field. Its existing infrastructure includes five field operations and three head offices which allow UNRWA to respond immediately to emergency needs whether these are from natural or man-made disasters or conflict. UNRWA has food stocks, medical supplies, and other items such as tents and blankets in situ or nearby. Resources are usually available or can be diverted to meet needs on the ground. Its medical staff are seconded from WHO.

33. The World Food Programme (WFP). WFP's relief operations are carried out through five Regional Bureaux in the Operations Department and corresponding field offices. The division for Operational Policy support (OP) is responsible for inter-agency collaboration and is the focal point for relief policy coordination. The periodic estimates of relief requirements and assessment of food aid needs in emergency situations are carried out by the Regional Bureaux in consultation with the country offices and are coordinated through the OP. The relief funding is channelled through the International Emergency Food Reserve, which responds to all short term emergency needs. The Immediate Response Account is a stand-by reserve fund which permits immediate intervention for food purchases. In 1993, WFP established its Rapid Response Team, controlled at Headquarters level in the OP Division. Once deployed in the field, this team reports to the country Directors and the Bureaux Managers, to speed up relief interventions and help organize food delivery and distribution.

34. WFP is self-contained with regard to mobilization, shipment and delivery of emergency food aid. Separate Divisions are responsible for resource mobilization and for transport logistics. Emergency food is sent to Extended Delivery Points (EDPs) where the warehouses are located normally under control of WFP or under its implementing partners. Food aid is then delivered principally to recipient governments for natural disasters, but mainly through NGO partners and the UNHCR network when delivering food aid to refugees and internally displaced persons. In implementing its relief operations, WFP has been responsible for setting up special logistics units or centres such as the Regional Logistics Advisory Unit in Harare during the Southern Africa drought of 1992 and the Caucasus Logistics Advisory Unit for relief operations in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. WFP has set up transportation fleets to build up local capacity for food transport and distribution. It also relies on an extensive communications network for necessary information which permits rapid transport and delivery of food aid.

35. The World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO has a three-tiered management structure and is not as field-oriented as its other operational partners. Headquarters, including a Division of Emergency and Humanitarian Action, is responsible for overall policies which are carried out at regional level by regional offices in collaboration with the WHO Country Representatives. Country offices have a limited authority and latitude to decide on

major administrative and financial actions. WHO is reviewing its procedures, however, with a view to augmenting the operational latitude and responsibilities of its representatives. It has already done this in the African region, where, for example, WHO representatives, with the agreement of the government, have authority to reallocate part of their regular budget for emergency response activities.[25]

36. WHO puts priority on rebuilding national capacities and designs its emergency programme with this in mind. It is less involved with operational emergency issues related to the provision of survival assistance than other organizations such as UNICEF and NGOs. It wants to be seen as a health advisor by other agencies, with its main involvement in prevention and rehabilitation.

## B. Mandates

37. The bureaucratic structures of relief agencies and their field offices will have an affect, often limiting, on the extent to which operations will be rapid, flexible or efficient in the field. The mandates of the different agencies, however, are what largely determines the presence, competence and, in particular, the division of labour in providing humanitarian assistance in emergency situations. For coordination and operational purposes, mandates have certain limitations and possible impacts on the number and capacity of relief agencies that will provide effective relief, particularly in complex emergencies and in the field. To counter the limitations, major relief agencies are often justified in stretching their mandates. The UNHCR mandate, for example, covers the provision of both protection and relief and rehabilitation assistance to refugees and returnees; UNHCR will also provide non-food inputs, and complementary foods.

38. Operational limitations of mandates include their tendency to address assistance to countries with governments, rather than to countries with little or no governance. WHO has a mandate, for example, which requires Governments or Government bodies to request or accept its relief assistance before it can be provided. Agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, or WFP, because of their specific mandates to work within countries, on the other hand, are likely to have greater field presence and hence bear most of the brunt of the relief effort.

39. Mandates also tend to address people rather than needs, which may further debilitate operations, particularly in emergency situations. Food, health, development, or environment needs supersede the people they affect, be it refugees, women, children, or internally displaced persons. In addressing an emergency, the construction of roads, the provision of portable water supply systems and the building of houses and accommodation facilities, for example, would do more for refugees, women, or children, than facing the situation the other way round.

40. DHA, for example, has a mandate which is broad and largely non-specific. The scope and variety of issues which can be conceived to fall under the heading of humanitarian coordination is almost limitless. DHA, expected to be the coordinating entity of United Nations system humanitarian assistance, has also provided assistance to demobilized combatants and displaced people.

41. There are several agencies that have been mandated to work in the areas of displaced persons, demining and demobilization, for example. The Secretary-General, in his report on assistance in mine clearance, designated DHA to function as the focal point for all mine-

related activities within the United Nations system.[26] UNDP and DPKO are also mandated to coordinate action in the demining area, and DHA and DPKO are mandated to undertake activities in the demobilization field. UNICEF is mandated to work with displaced women and children, and UNHCR selectively works with the rest of the displaced population. UNDP also undertakes to resettle and reintegrate uprooted populations, including returning refugees, internally displaced and demobilized personnel.

42. Traditionally, mutually agreed upon and situation-specific division of labour at the field level has resolved gaps and unnecessary overlap in mandates. In the agricultural field there is overlap between FAO, UNICEF and NGOs in the provision of seeds, tools, animal vaccines and other essential inputs. In the medical field there is overlap between WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, and NGOs. WHO and UNICEF are looking at solving problems of overlap between the two organizations. UNESCO shares mandates in basic education with UNICEF and refugee education with UNHCR. UNESCO also shares with UNCHS-Habitat the provision of guidelines on constructing school buildings to resist effects of disasters.

### C. Joint and bilateral agreements

43. There are many types of formal, informal, joint and bilateral agreements among operating relief agencies. The most common type of bilateral agreement is the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). Other types of agreements include the Letter of Understanding, the Standing Agreement, and the Cooperation Agreement. There are also ad hoc arrangements made whenever stop-gaps are needed.

44. DHA has several Memoranda of Understanding, including those concluded by the former United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) which exist to facilitate action on natural disasters. It has a Special Agreement with the Swiss Government for close cooperation in the field, and other agreements concluded with the Governments of Italy, Japan and with WHO for airlifts of relief items from the Pisa Warehouse managed by DHA. DHA has also a number of MoUs, for instance with the Danish and Norwegian Refugees Councils and IOM. Some MoUs govern the provision of personnel for emergency operations.

45. FAO collaborates with WFP, under a General Regulations agreement, for emergencies caused by crop failures, and for the mounting of crop and food supply assessment missions.

46. UNHCR has well-developed formal and informal contacts with most agencies in the United Nations system. It has MoUs with ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, WFP, and WHO. It also has an Exchange of Letters with UNDP which are in the process of conversion into an MoU; a Cooperation Agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and ad hoc agreements/arrangements with the other organizations as and when necessary. In addition, UNHCR maintains close collaboration with UNV and the Bretton Woods Institutions, both at the field and Headquarters levels.

47. UNHCR is presently working on elaborating a detailed, global MoU with UNICEF: they traditionally have operated under ad hoc arrangements and letters of understanding. The areas of close cooperation include water, sanitation, vaccination campaigns and the provision of cold chain services. UNHCR is also developing a closer relationship with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

48. UNHCR collaborates as well with non-United Nations system agencies, such as the IOM and ICRC, IFRCS, and increasingly with regional organizations and a large number of NGOs. In 1994 UNHCR signed project agreements with some 360 NGOs in all regions of the world to finance partial or full NGO implementation of projects. In Europe, UNHCR recognizes NGOs to implement some of its protection-related activities. Agreements with NGOs are made after joint consultations and assessments and are normally for one calendar year. Work is carried out under letters of understanding or within project frameworks.

49. UNICEF works closely with DHA, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, WHO and other agencies participating in the United Nations system-wide programmes for disaster relief and humanitarian emergency assistance as well as with governments and the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS) and many other non-governmental organizations. UNICEF is discussing and negotiating MoUs relating to emergencies with UNHCR, WFP, and WHO. It is also negotiating a standing agreement with Swedish NGOs and with the Disaster Relief Agency (DRA) in the Netherlands.

50. UNRWA has bilateral contacts with other United Nations agencies involved in Palestinian assistance, i.e., ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO. It also has bilateral contacts with donor countries, inter-governmental bodies, in particular with the Arab League, host authorities, NGOs, specialized technical institutes and others. Formal agreements, MoUs or other arrangements are worked out when and where needed. UNRWA carries out joint or complementary activities with the host authority or another body which may immunize non-refugee children, while UNRWA immunizes Palestinian refugee children.

51. WFP cooperates with UNHCR for refugees, returnees and some cases of internally displaced persons (IDPs). It has other joint agreements with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and ad hoc arrangements with NGOs such as CARE and World Vision with whom it would like to collaborate officially. WFP has an MoU with UNICEF which is being revised, and an agreement with DHA which is about to be concluded.

52. WHO is in the process of updating its MoU with UNHCR and is developing similar memoranda with UNICEF and IOM. WHO is also working on ways and means to collaborate more closely with the ICRC and IFRCS as well as to developing a framework for partnership with medical NGOs.

53. As they stand, these many and varied joint and bilateral agreements cover natural and complex emergencies (separately), may or may not include DHA, and leave each agency the privilege of acting on its own accord, by its own mandate. According to one humanitarian observer, the end of the cold war brought on an emerging era of multilateralism which has been replaced by a disconnected bilateralism partly due to a lack of global vision by the major powers and a tendency to relegate responsibilities to the United Nations without the commensurate support. This disconnected bilateralism has not offered an effective alternative for emergency response and humanitarian coordination.[27]

54. A unilateral agreement identified and specified by the different coordination mechanisms, such as the ACC, the IASC, and the JCGP for example, would help bridge gaps and remove overlap in operational aspects of all the stand-alone agreements. A unilateral agreement should have common pragmatic intervention principles and operation aspects to include the integration of emergency and development-oriented activities in each case, and should be studied against available expertise, capacity and willingness of the

agencies involved. The Memorandum of Understanding by UNHCR and WFP has been highly praised by the respective agencies, and can be used as an example. It identifies the responsibilities of each agency and includes who delivers basic commodities, complementary commodities and non-foods, in what quantity, and in what time span. It also identifies who is responsible for the food reserves and transport including vehicles and planes. From an academic point of view, any written and operational global policy agreement should be validated against at least measures of specificity, clarity and relevance, or undergo a type of "SMART" test to see if goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.[28]

## III. PROBLEMS AND IMPROVEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM COORDINATION MECHANISMS AT HEADQUARTERS AND IN THE FIELD

55. Much attention has been devoted in recent years to improving the overall coordination of the multi-actor humanitarian relief system. Member States, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations continue to explore more effective methods of cooperation and coordination among themselves and with the local authorities and communities to provide relief assistance for natural and for complex emergencies. The effectiveness of humanitarian operations in the field depends on inter-agency cooperation, capacity and preparedness, as well as the neutrality and impartiality of United Nations action in conflict situations. It also requires coordination between relief and development activities.[29]

56. While there is no official agreement on the term "coordination," it is this report's contention that coordination is best approached in terms of facilitation and by consensus on the division of labour. The more the actions of coordination are perceived as impinging upon the operational mandates of agencies, the more agencies will resist coordination. To that extent coordination needs to be seen as a facilitating function that poses no territorial challenge to any of those being coordinated.[30]

57. In this case, the coordination role of DHA would be more that of an advocate and a facilitator, with the expertise and foresight to help the operational agencies best carry out their functions. This also implies that DHA would have no direct operational functions, and would restrict its responsibilities to coordination alone.[31] This in no way should be taken to undermine the role of coordination and the difficulties that arise in maintaining a clear division of labour when a growing number of actors, often unpredictably, become embroiled in the same functions.[32]This coordination also does not negate earlier definitions provided for coordination and the systematic utilization of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. What it assumes, rather is that an effective facilitation would result in a greater willingness to accept coordination and provide for the coordinator the leadership necessary based on a proven capacity to facilitate.

58. The chapter that follows will analyse briefly: (a) the overall coordination agencies; (b) the many existing overall coordination mechanisms for natural disasters and complex emergencies at Headquarters and in the field; (c) field operations and; (d) the problems perceived with actions needed for improvement.

### A. Overall coordination agencies

59. Coordination is not an easy task and has to provide a clear sense of benefit and "value-added" to the overall relief network. There are many variables which - given the multiplicity of the actors, linkages and loyalties of those who form the international relief network - prevent effective coordination from becoming a habit.[33] For example, United Nations agencies feel pressured to perform in order to receive funds. This is often interpreted as a call for visibility and a necessity for each to show their own flag. Similarly, donors provide funds to different United Nations agencies, often from different budget lines, to undertake similar activities, including the function of coordination itself. The unclear lines of authority and allocation of functions can lead to misinterpretation of guidelines for cooperation. The "added challenge" is to coordinate between coordinating agencies.

**1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs**

60. DHA is not an operational agency. It does not deliver the assistance. It has a responsibility to ensure that humanitarian assistance within the various sectors is effectively carried out and that coordination within the sectors is undertaken. The primary role of DHA, at both the Headquarters and field level, is to facilitate coordination among all participants in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to victims facing a natural or complex emergency situation

61. The separation of DHA offices has been perceived by the majority of humanitarian operational agencies questioned as a problem. Some consider Geneva the de facto focal point for humanitarian assistance in the world - because of the presence of ICRC, IFRC, UNHCR, WHO, important NGOs in Geneva, and WFP and FAO in Rome - and believe that the concentration of coordination of complex emergencies in New York has deprived all these humanitarian participants of effective, easily accessible operational interaction.

62. In DHA's point of view, while it remains actively present in Geneva and maintains its capacity to interact with Geneva and European-based humanitarian agencies, the rationale for consolidating the Desk Officer structure for Complex Emergencies in New York is justified given the need for close liaison and constant consultation with United Nations decision-making organs concerned with political and security matters. According to DHA New York, there is a clear allocation of responsibilities, good flow of information, daily consultation, and collegial working relations between the two offices.

63. The separation of DHA offices also leads to criticism that the one coordinating entity expected to unify and synthesize the multiple United Nations operational partners in relief assistance, is itself divided between Geneva and New York. While modern technology facilitates better communication over long distances, it seems inappropriate that the two offices must coordinate with each other before coordinating emergency field functions.

64. DHA and DPKO cooperate in mine-clearance assistance. Programmes for assistance in mine-clearance fall into three categories: (a) demining as part of a solely humanitarian operation, e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq; (b) demining carried out in collaboration with peace-keeping forces, e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia; and (c) assistance in mine clearance capacity-building as part of post conflict peace-building and economic and social development, e.g. Cambodia. Under the first category, DHA has sole responsibility at the Headquarters level. Under the second category, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) and DHA cooperate. Under the third category, UNDP and DPKO are involved with DHA providing coordination and resource-mobilization assistance

65. DHA actions to broaden and strengthen the involvement of relevant agencies and entities with United Nations coordination efforts at Headquarters include increasing linkages with major international NGOs - particularly when addressing Consolidated Appeals as was the case for Rwanda - and making the Department of Political Affairs, the High Commissioner on Human Rights, and the representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons members in the IASC meetings. Most importantly, DHA has prepared a new draft framework for cooperation between three departments in New York: DPA, DPKO and DHA. (see DPA-DPKO-DPA flow chart on pages 16-21)

66. Within the new DHA-DPKO-DPA framework, DHA, United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are able to contribute, where appropriate, to the preparation of the DPKO technical survey, operational concept, and mission support concept. They have the opportunity, for example, to review and comment upon the draft Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and the initial cost analysis. Similarly, DPKO and DHA can provide input to DPA, for the drafting of the reports of the Secretary-General for the Security Council.

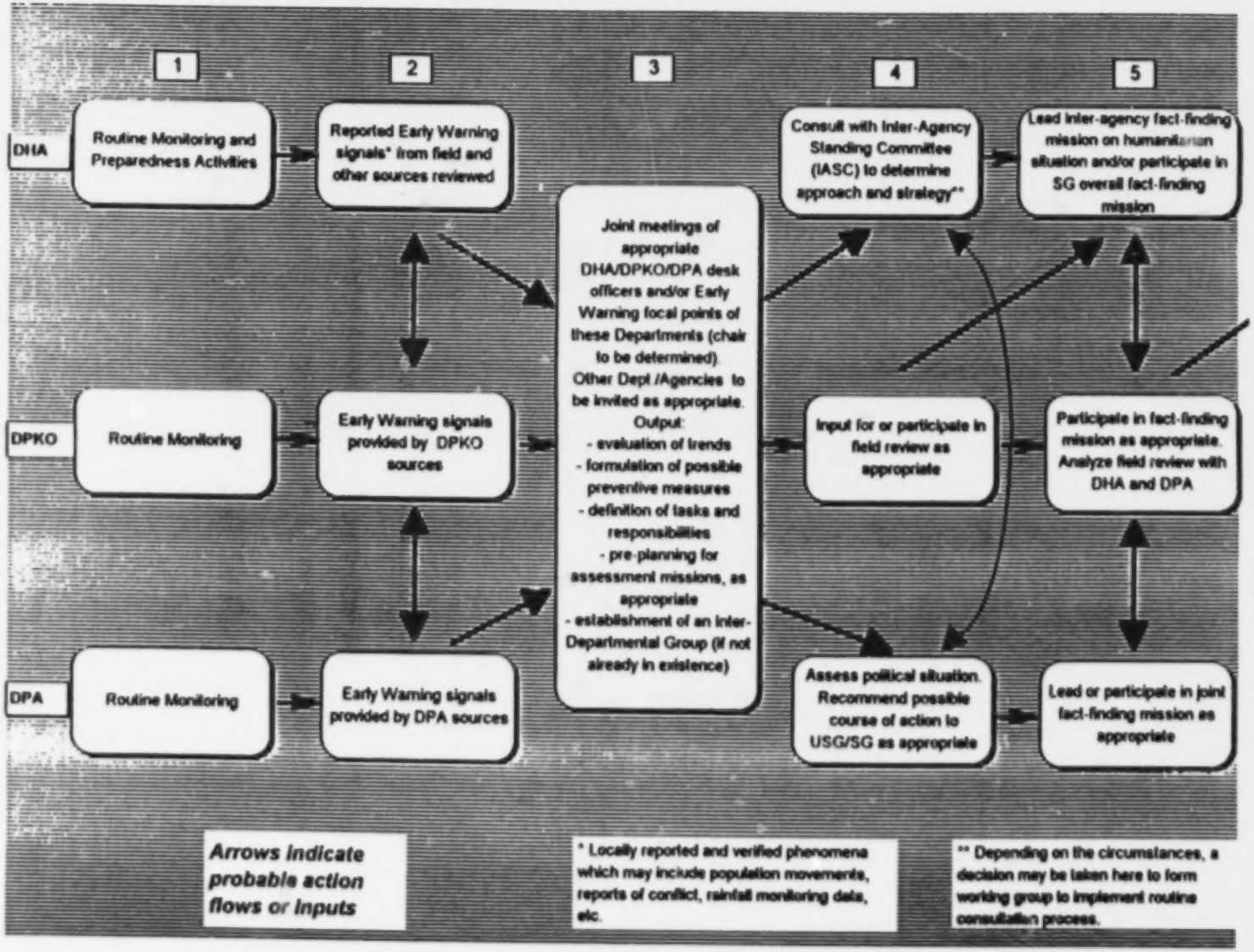
67. The draft framework is particularly commendable for two main reasons. First, it emphasizes horizontal coordination between the three departments and enhances the consultative process of humanitarian concerns in military missions. In other words, it provides the possibility for military force needs to be elaborated in conjunction with humanitarian assistance operations and concerns, particularly in situations where protection of relief assistance is part of the mission's mandate.[34]

68. Second, the draft framework provides a routine mechanism of joint analysis of early-warning information, originating within the Departments or from outside sources, and joint formulation of proposals for preventive action. Tests of this mechanism include ad hoc consultations among relevant desk and planning officers of the three Departments and six simulated briefing sessions, tried spontaneously and successfully to consider situations in Sierra Leone, Yemen and Haiti. This draft framework has been presented to the various organizations at Headquarters level and to the IASC. The Commission on Human Rights, within the domain of its responsibilities, has responded very favorably to this framework of information exchange and has participated in providing reports, report formats, and mind-set for the DHA-DPA-DPKO processes.

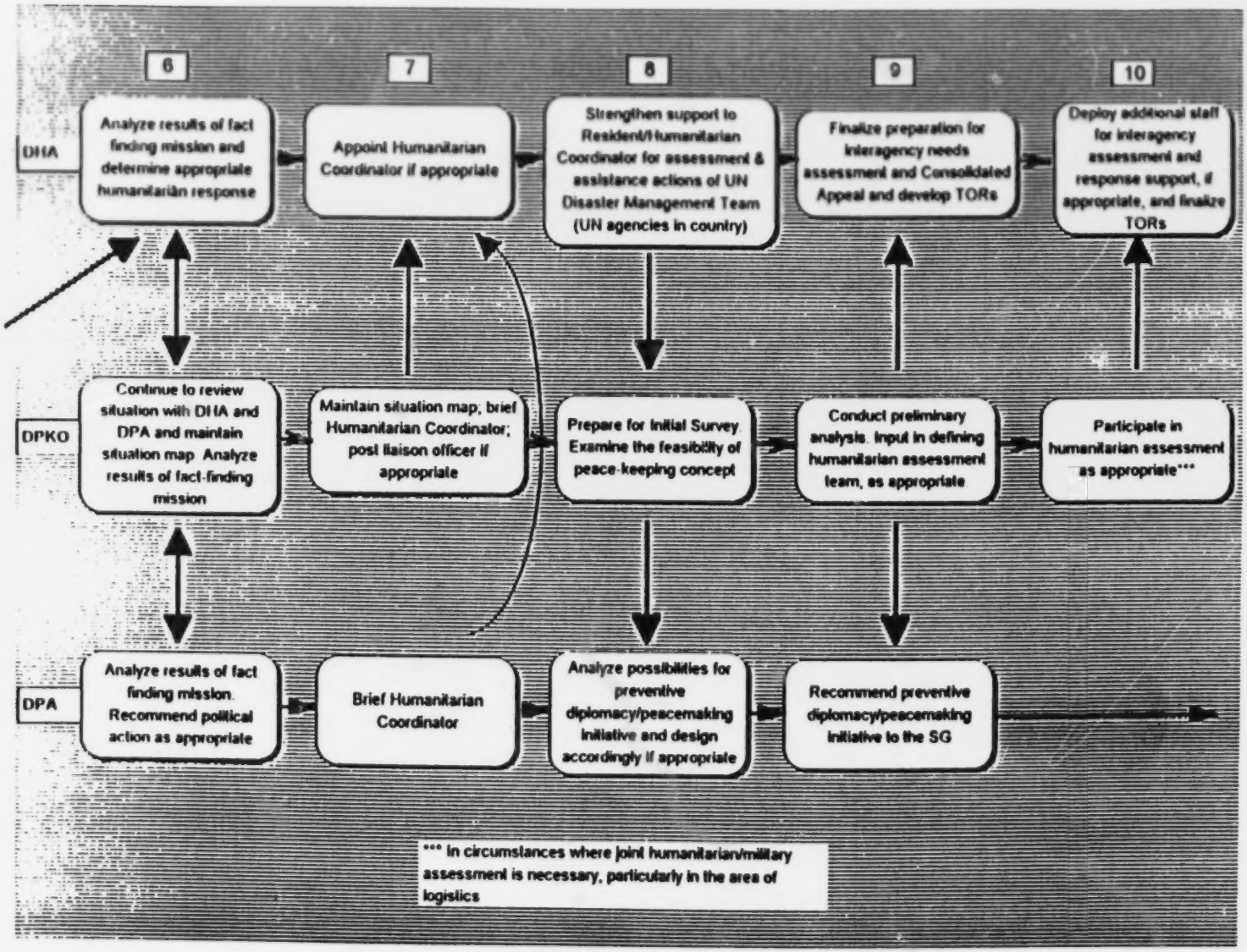
69. What has not yet been established, is the follow-up once the inter-departmental analysis of early-warning signals and planning of preventive action (Box 3 in flow chart) is determined. This framework is, moreover, yet to be transferred to the operational agencies in the field, on the one hand, and to UNDP, on the other.

70. It seems essential that UNDP should be an important actor in these efforts; both at the early-warning stage as well as throughout the crisis leading to recovery. The purpose of information exchange is essentially to provide decision-makers with the basis for analysis and action. Fundamental issues include the need for action during crisis that also foresees and takes into account the post-crisis environment. In this regard, emergency responses also need to be directed to areas and communities where acceptable levels of security and stability exist. In these conditions, information monitoring, decision-making and action during crisis must also take account of the wider developmental concerns.

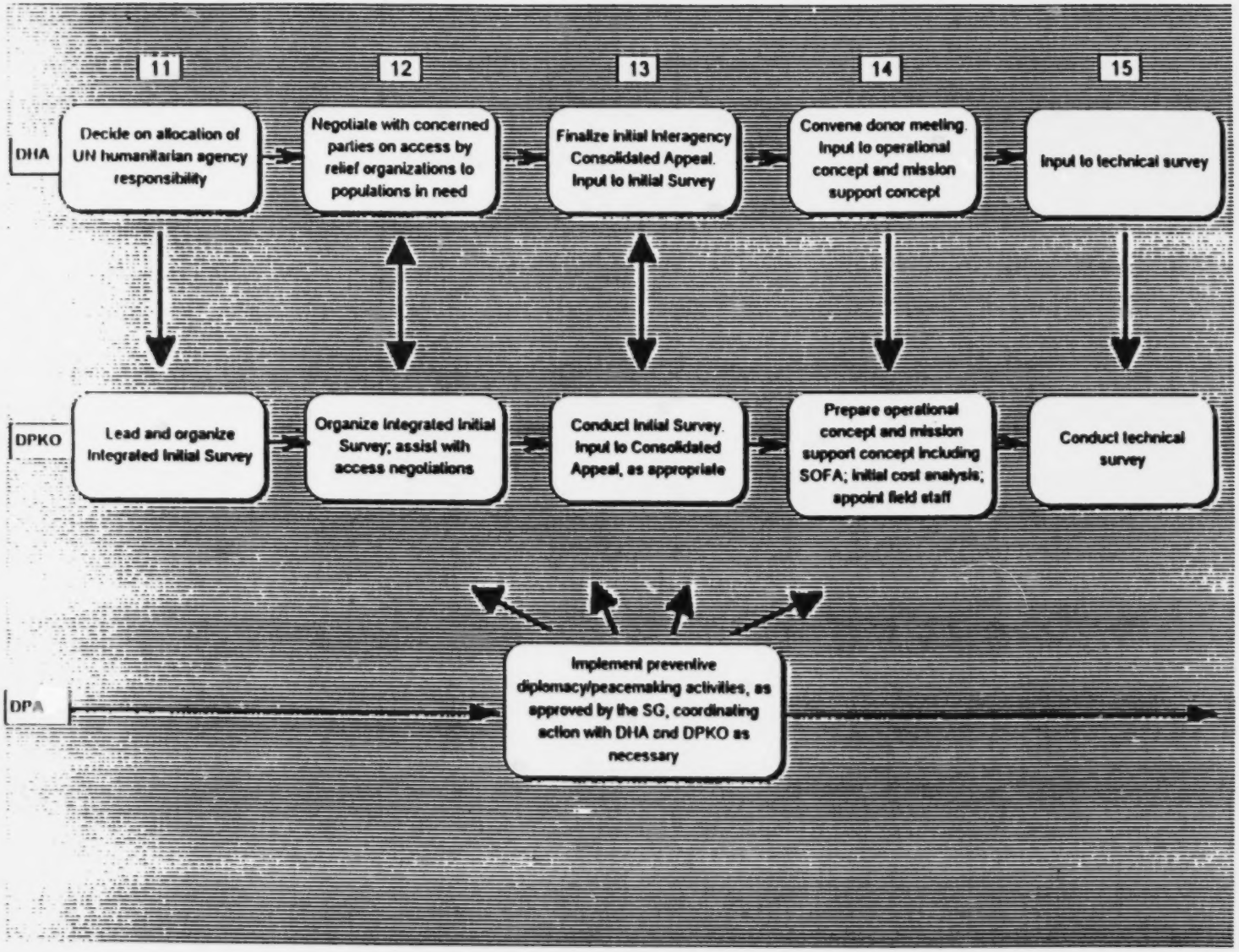
## COORDINATION OF DHA, DPKO AND DPA ACTIVITIES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD


1
2
3
4
5
DHA
Routine Monitoring and Preparedness Activities
Reported Early Warning signals* from field and other sources reviewed
Consult with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to determine approach and strategy**
Lead inter-agency fact-finding mission on humanitarian situation and/or participate in SG overall fact-finding mission
DPKO
Routine Monitoring
Early Warning signals provided by DPKO sources
Input for or participate in field review as appropriate
Participate in fact-finding mission as appropriate. Analyze field review with DHA and DPA
DPA
Routine Monitoring
Early Warning signals provided by DPA sources
Assess political situation. Recommend possible course of action to USG/SG as appropriate
Lead or participate in joint fact-finding mission as appropriate
Joint meetings of appropriate DHA/DPKO/DPA desk officers and/or Early Warning focal points of these Departments (chair to be determined). Other Dept /Agencies to be invited as appropriate. Output:
- evaluation of trends
- formulation of possible preventive measures
- definition of tasks and responsibilities
- pre-planning for assessment missions, as appropriate
- establishment of an Inter-Departmental Group (if not already in existence)
Arrows indicate probable action flows or inputs
* Locally reported and verified phenomena which may include population movements, reports of conflict, rainfall monitoring data, etc.
** Depending on the circumstances, a decision may be taken here to form working group to implement routine consultation process.

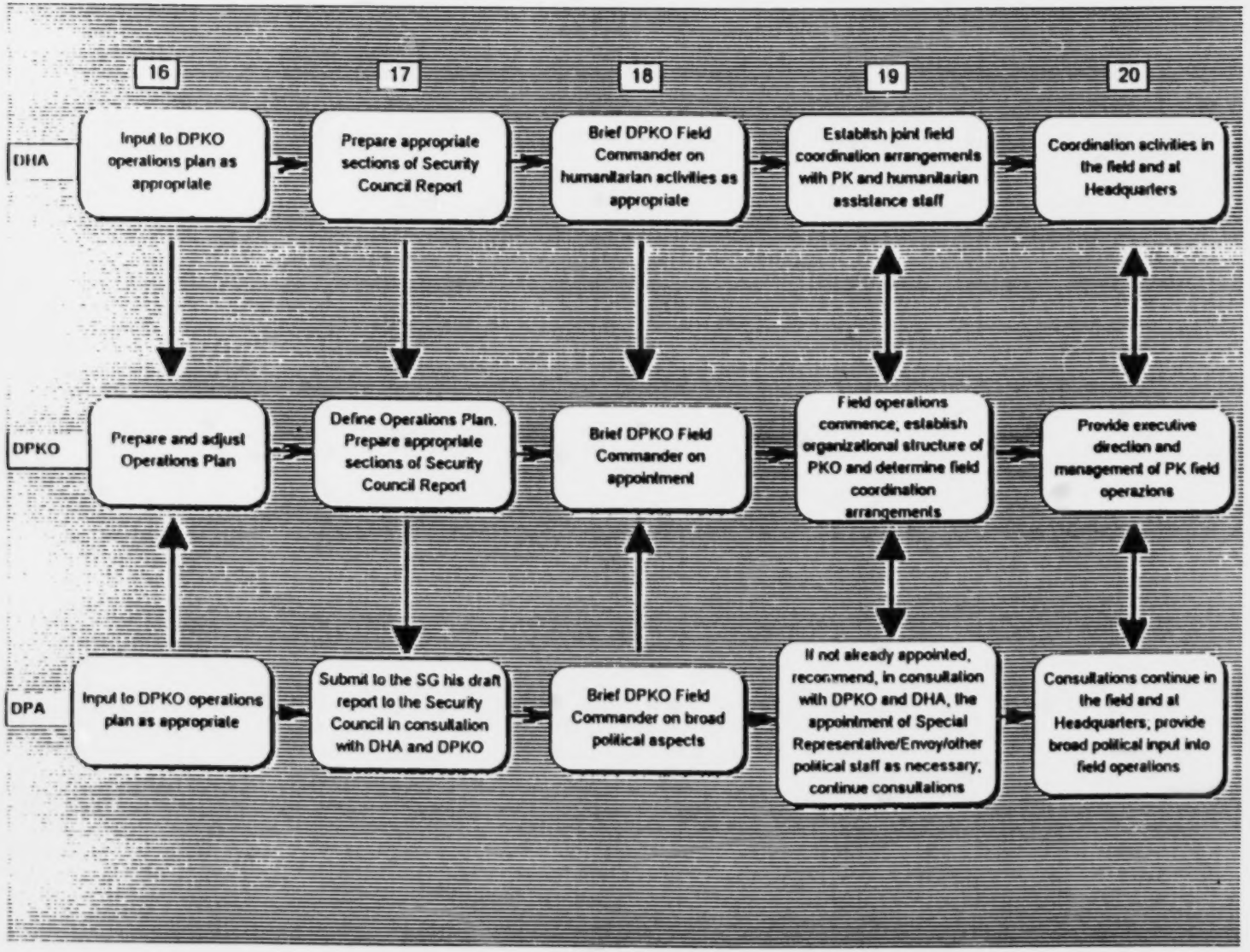
## COORDINATION OF DHA, DPKO AND DPA ACTIVITIES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD


6
7
8
9
10
DHA
Analyze results of fact finding mission and determine appropriate humanitarian response
Appoint Humanitarian Coordinator if appropriate
Strengthen support to Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for assessment & assistance actions of UN Disaster Management Team (UN agencies in country)
Finalize preparation for interagency needs assessment and Consolidated Appeal and develop TORs
Deploy additional staff for interagency assessment and response support, if appropriate, and finalize TORs
DPKO
Continue to review situation with DHA and DPA and maintain situation map. Analyze results of fact-finding mission
Maintain situation map; brief Humanitarian Coordinator; post liaison officer if appropriate
Prepare for initial Survey. Examine the feasibility of peace-keeping concept
Conduct preliminary analysis. Input in defining humanitarian assessment team, as appropriate
Participate in humanitarian assessment as appropriate***
DPA
Analyze results of fact finding mission. Recommend political action as appropriate
Brief Humanitarian Coordinator
Analyze possibilities for preventive diplomacy/peacemaking initiative and design accordingly if appropriate
Recommend preventive diplomacy/peacemaking initiative to the SG
*** In circumstances where joint humanitarian/military assessment is necessary, particularly in the area of logistics

## COORDINATION OF DHA, DPKO AND DPA ACTIVITIES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD


11
12
13
14
15
DHA
Decide on allocation of UN humanitarian agency responsibility
Negotiate with concerned parties on access by relief organizations to populations in need
Finalize initial interagency Consolidated Appeal. Input to Initial Survey
Convene donor meeting. Input to operational concept and mission support concept
Input to technical survey
DPKO
Lead and organize Integrated Initial Survey
Organize Integrated Initial Survey; assist with access negotiations
Conduct Initial Survey. Input to Consolidated Appeal, as appropriate
Prepare operational concept and mission support concept including SOFA; initial cost analysis; appoint field staff
Conduct technical survey
DPA
Implement preventive diplomacy/peacemaking activities, as approved by the SG, coordinating action with DHA and DPKO as necessary

## COORDINATION OF DHA, DPKO AND DPA ACTIVITIES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD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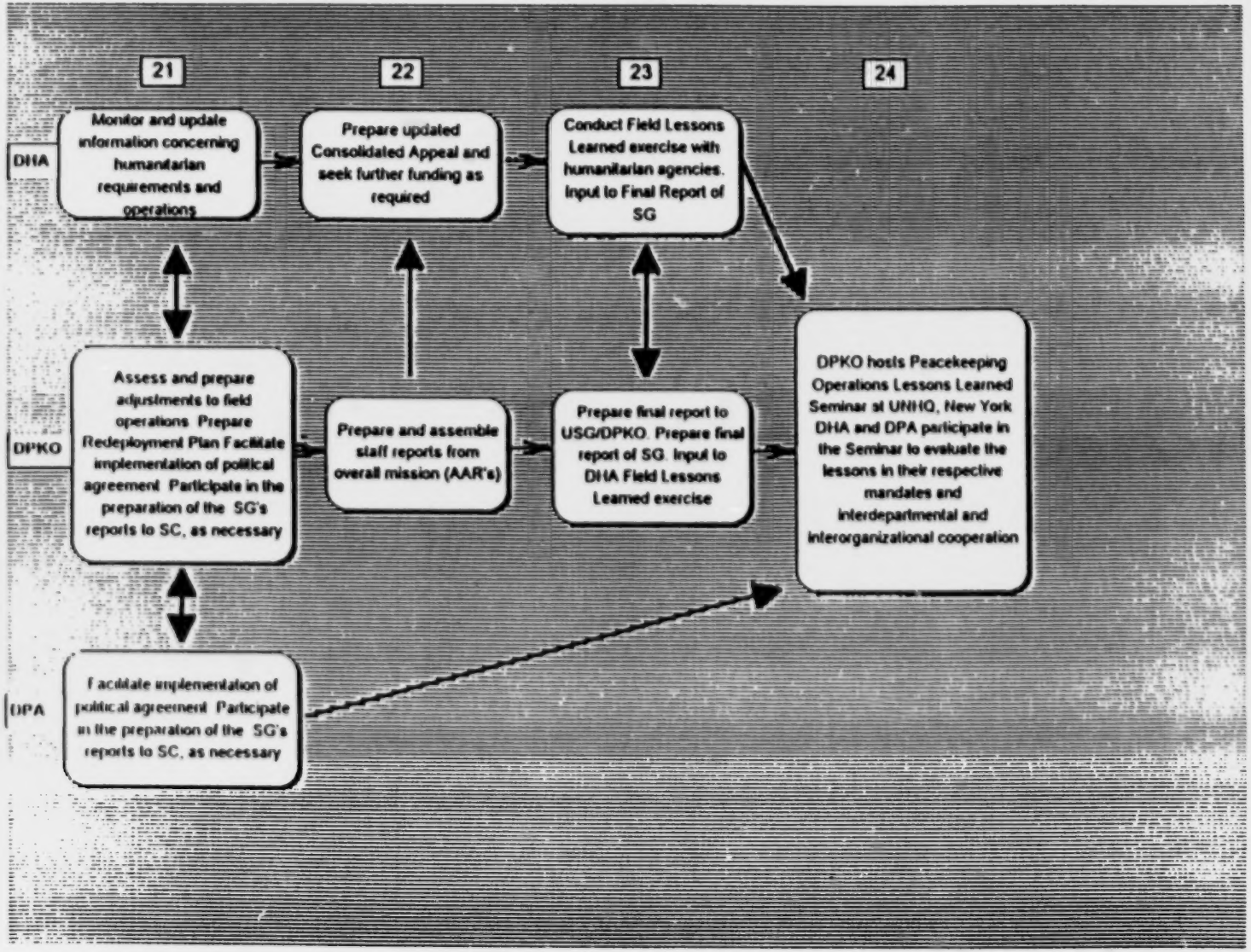
DHA
Input to DPKO operations plan as appropriate
Prepare appropriate sections of Security Council Report
Brief DPKO Field Commander on humanitarian activities as appropriate
Establish joint field coordination arrangements with PK and humanitarian assistance staff
Coordination activities in the field and at Headquarters
DPKO
Prepare and adjust Operations Plan
Define Operations Plan. Prepare appropriate sections of Security Council Report
Brief DPKO Field Commander on appointment
Field operations commence, establish organizational structure of PKO and determine field coordination arrangements
Provide executive direction and management of PK field operations
DPA
Input to DPKO operations plan as appropriate
Submit to the SG his draft report to the Security Council in consultation with DHA and DPKO
Brief DPKO Field Commander on broad political aspects
If not already appointed, recommend, in consultation with DPKO and DHA, the appointment of Special Representative/Envoy/other political staff as necessary, continue consultations
Consultations continue in the field and at Headquarters, provide broad political input into field operations

## COORDINATION OF DHA, DPKO AND DPA ACTIVITIES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD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DHA
Monitor and update information concerning humanitarian requirements and operations
Prepare updated Consolidated Appeal and seek further funding as required
Conduct Field Lessons Learned exercise with humanitarian agencies. Input to Final Report of SG
DPKO
Assess and prepare adjustments to field operations. Prepare Redeployment Plan. Facilitate implementation of political agreement. Participate in the preparation of the SG's reports to SC, as necessary
Prepare and assemble staff reports from overall mission (AAR's)
Prepare final report to USG/DPKO. Prepare final report of SG. Input to DHA Field Lessons Learned exercise
DPKO hosts Peacekeeping Operations Lessons Learned Seminar at UNHQ, New York. DHA and DPA participate in the Seminar to evaluate the lessons in their respective mandates and interdepartmental and interorganizational cooperation
DPA
Facilitate implementation of political agreement. Participate in the preparation of the SG's reports to SC, as necessary

### 2. The United Nations Development Programme

71. UNDP is the major financing organization of the United Nations system and the main actor in the support of development activities. UNDP maintains its role of coordination and support of the United Nations system in countries which are affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies. UNDP's position is that developmental activities never cease in conditions of crisis. The semi-permanent nature of humanitarian actions in many crisis conditions has highlighted the need to ensure that external interventions, by themselves, do not negatively affect the fragile domestic environment that necessitated humanitarian assistance in the first place. Consequently, the organization's on-going programmes and projects are re-directed to address the consequences of the crisis, prevent further deterioration and strengthen the foundations of recovery.

72. In most complex emergency countries where a Humanitarian Coordinator has not been appointed, the United Nations Resident Coordinator (normally the UNDP Resident Representative) is responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (DHA). UNDP provides the support necessary to the Resident Coordinator to facilitate his/her work related to emergency relief operations and preventive and curative development - a term identified by the Secretary-General in the Agenda for Development. The UNDP Country Office will designate staff members to assist the Coordinator and place communication equipment, and transport, administrative and other services at his/her disposal. Additionally, through its extensive field-based network, the organization provides important logistic and administrative assistance to the national and international relief community. For example, the UNDP's Country Strategy Note and other programming and reporting instruments serve to identify the level of the country's vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters and initiate disaster prevention, with the Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT) and national authorities, mitigation and preparedness activities.[35]

## B. Major coordination mechanisms for natural and complex emergencies

73. The main priority for the United Nations in humanitarian assistance coordination is to facilitate the work of the international organizations and NGOs and to promote early action in emergencies. DHA's overall authority for coordination of natural disasters appears to be less questioned by the operational agencies than its coordination of complex emergencies. This is possibly because affected governments coordinate the response to natural disasters and DHA assists in this task if so requested; and possibly because the structures for data flow, reporting and field missions, on-site assessment and coordination for natural disasters are more firmly in place than they are in complex emergencies, where coordination itself is hindered by a myriad of political impediments.

74. For natural disaster situations, the main United Nations coordination mechanisms are the United Nations agencies working together within the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT), under the auspices of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The UN-DMT may not request assistance if the Government does not indicate a need for it and/or if there is a judgement that in-country resources are sufficient. Such disasters are normally dealt with primarily by staff already in the country, and rarely call for any change in existing coordination arrangements. The initial humanitarian response in such circumstances, including the coordination functions, is usually measured within days or a relatively short span of time.

75. The emergency response system managed by the DHA Relief Coordination Branch (RCB) includes the following:

(a) RCB operates a twenty-four-hour duty system to receive and process urgent information on a new disaster. If required, and in consultation with the local UNDP Office, DHA can field a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team to assist the affected country during the relief phase. It then alerts Search and Rescue (SAR) teams from different countries when the situation warrants it, as in the case of a major earthquake affecting urban areas.

(b) It then provides assistance by establishing an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), which provides a framework for cooperation and coordination among international relief organizations, in support of the national or local authorities in charge of the emergency response.

(c) DHA can mobilize Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) from a number of countries and multinational organizations. It can also provide an emergency cash grant (up to US $50,000 within the first week) to the government of the disaster-stricken country. These funds can only be granted, through the local UNDP office, when the government has launched an appeal for international assistance immediately after the occurrence of the disaster.

(d) Cash contributions by donors to affected countries are managed by DHA under a dedicated sub-account in the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Relief to cover priority relief needs identified in close consultation with the government of the affected country and the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT). DHA maintains the DHA Warehouse in Pisa, Italy with donated disaster relief items, and a Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities. This Register provides information on search and rescue teams, national emergency response offices, emergency relief services of donor countries and on emergency stockpiles of disaster relief items.

76. The main tools made available to DHA for the coordination of complex emergencies are: the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the US $50 million Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) pledged by Member States, and the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP).

77. For complex emergencies normally associated with insecurity, the roles of the United Nations designated official for security in-country, the Resident Coordinator and/or the Humanitarian Coordinator are important, as is the reinforcement staff, logistics and resource support required from outside. Based on the definition and characteristics of a situation, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in consultation with the members of the IASC, may conclude that the situation requires a Humanitarian Coordinator because there is a need for:

(a) Intensive and extensive political and management mediation and coordination to enable the delivery of the humanitarian response, including negotiated access to affected populations;

(b) Massive humanitarian assistance requiring intervention by a range of participants;

(c) The situation demands a political solution which often involves Security Council action.

78. The fundamental difference between the coordination of disaster relief involving natural disasters and humanitarian assistance involving complex emergencies, which often involve peace-keeping operations, is the increase in the number of participants globally and locally, and the volatility of the political environment which must be coordinated with the military and humanitarian components for effective operations.

**1. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee**

79. The principal mechanism for coordination among humanitarian organizations is a thirteen-member IASC composed of executive heads from the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| **United Nations system** | - Department of Humanitarian Affairs<br>- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)<br>- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)<br>- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)<br>- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<br>- World Food Programme (WFP)<br>- World Health Organization (WHO) |
| **Non-United Nations system** | - International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)<br>- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS) - as observer<br>- International Organization for Migration (IOM) |
| **Non-Governmental Organizations - by invitation** | - InterAction<br>- International Council of Voluntary Agencies<br>- Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response[36] |

80. The IASC serves as a consultative body to harmonize system-wide responses to specific emergencies, formulates the Consolidated Appeal Process, and determines priorities and aims to support field work. It addresses both policy and major operational issues such as field response and rapid deployment of personnel and resources; effective use of military and civilian assets, agreements on coordination with NGOs and other actors involved in peace-keeping and political affairs; demobilisation and demining; and fund raising and donor response. In other words, it is supposed to address aspects of emergencies for which no single United Nations system agency has a specific mandate.

81. Examples of IASC initiatives include defining complex emergencies and Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator. A roster of qualified Humanitarian Coordinators has also been created for rapid deployment. To facilitate mutual understanding, cooperation and coordination between agencies in emergencies, the IASC has prepared the draft "IASC Field Coordination Guidelines in Emergencies." The Guidelines are intended to prepare a set of resource materials and practical guidelines.

82. At its session in December 1994, the IASC adopted the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and its recommendation that the Emergency Relief Coordinator serve as the reference point for the United Nations system to receive information or requests for assistance and protection on actual or developing situations of IDPs, and that might require coordinated international response. The in-country coordination system to deal with IDPs would be the Disaster Management Team (DMT) headed by the Resident Representative/Coordinator. The IASC has also established a Task Force to develop recommendations regarding IDPs and has approved a paper on the protection of Humanitarian Mandates in Conflict Situations.

83. The IASC at the Agency heads level, is assisted by the IASC Working Group (IASC-WG) which, when necessary, creates Task Forces for specific issues. An example is the Task Force on the effective use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in support of all types of humanitarian operations. It has been working to develop a common framework and standard operating procedures. The Task Force is composed of operational agencies of the United Nations system: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, WFP and DPKO. It works under the aegis of the IASC, reports to the IASC-WG, and is chaired by DHA.

84. The IASC-WG is then supported by the Inter-Agency Support Unit (IASU) or Secretariat, located in DHA, Geneva. It treats operational questions on a daily basis and ensures that procedural and related policy questions for emergencies get attention. The IASU is assisted by seconded staff from various agencies. Special Programme Staff may be working within IASU on activities in specific areas, such as Early Warning and Internally Displaced Persons.

85. This committee structure provides the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs with a mechanism for consultation and contact on all issues relevant to international humanitarian response activities. It requires, however, at least the following changes:

(a) Less meetings by hierarchical levels, in order to facilitate information flow and dissemination;

(b) Fewer task forces, in order to avoid delaying urgent field issues;

(c) At the same time, lateral coordination should be expanded to include the close participation of other United Nations departments such as DPKO and DPA.

86. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as an advisory body comprised of Heads of Agencies, serves to reach agreement for coordinated action among members. It is the most important relief coordination mechanism and comes closest to consolidating United Nations system relief efforts. It should further streamline its procedures, and include field and non-governmental participation. If agency members agree that external assistance is required, then the IASC should jointly fund a collaborative effort to sub-contract management

consultants from major private firms to enhance its management culture. For the full potential of IASC to be realized, it will require the collective commitment of all its members, and further concentration on action-oriented decisions on major policy and strategic issues of field operations.

## 2. The Consolidated Appeal Process

87. As far back as 1991, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to provide a mechanism to promote the incorporation of the disparate emergency relief requirements of United Nations operational agencies into one holistic appeal. This was regarded as essential for consolidation, and a cost-effective way to fund emergency assistance at a time when funding sources were becoming increasingly stretched.[37]

88. The CAP is used in instances where an emergency requires a system-wide response. It is considered the beginning of a process which moves from initial assessments of an emergency situation through to strategic objectives, rather than, merely, a document appealing for funds.[38] It consists of five stages (a) pre-disaster planning, (b) needs assessment, (c) strategic planning, (d) appeal formulation, and (e) post-appeal activities.[39] This appeal process is to be field-based and to pay attention to linkages with participants outside the United Nations system, such as NGOs, in order to incorporate their views and assessments in an overall strategy.[40]

89. The following three principles underline the consolidated approach:

(a) United Nations system agencies, in times of major or complex emergencies, are to work together with the countries affected by the emergency, to determine within one week the nature of the crisis and the requirements of the affected population.

(b) Consolidated appeals identify and prioritize the requirements of the segments of the population most urgently in need of attention.

(c) Consolidated appeals reflect - to the extent possible - agencies' efforts to integrate their respective activities.

90. In effect, the DHA-Relief Coordination Branch has to wait for an official request from the Government of the disaster-affected country to launch an appeal for international assistance. Then it launches its appeal based on an assessment of each organization's particular expertise and area of assistance.[41]

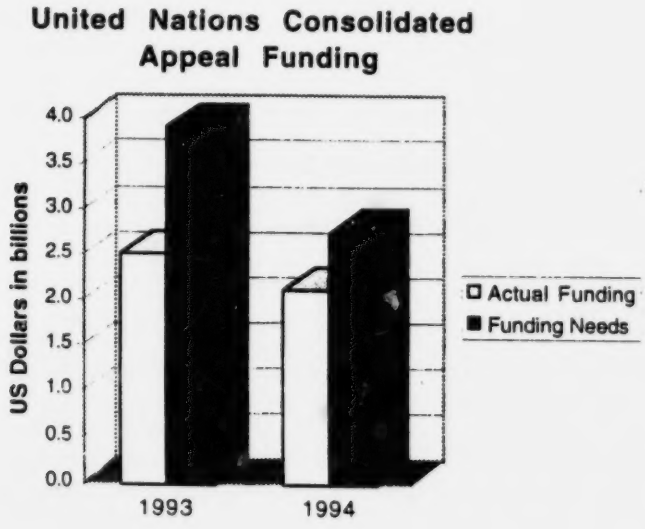
91. The Field Coordination Units (FCUs) contribute to the follow-up action required in the appeal process and keep both DHA Headquarters and the donor community informed of the latest developments from the field through situation reports. In many cases, the FCUs have produced "Revised Strategy" papers, in collaboration with all agencies/organizations and NGOs. These detail priority interventions, target beneficiaries, and provide a phased schedule for the funding of activities.

92. There is a diverse range of views within the United Nations system about DHA's role with respect to individual Agency fund-raising activities within the framework of the Consolidated Appeal. The emergency appeals often incorporate requirements included in agencies' individual appeals, and are used, in parallel with or in advance of, the consolidated appeals. Moreover, they may or may not involve all the agencies concerned. Agencies like

UNHCR and WFP which have large regular programmes concerned with lodging, care and feeding of refugees, have a constant ongoing dialogue with the donor community concerning their funding requirements and represent major shares in the consolidated appeal process. (See the graph below, for actual consolidated appeal shares.)

93. Other agencies, such as FAO, base their humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation activities in agriculture, on an assessment of needs conducted either independently or, in the context of Consolidated Appeals. FAO's activities, for example, are financed by contributions from governmental and non-governmental agencies, by United Nations agencies, and by FAO's own Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

94. For agencies such as WHO, on the other hand, the only source of funding for emergency health assistance are virtually always DHA inter-agency consolidated appeals and represent timely ad hoc contributions. Fund-raising efforts carried out through their Division of Emergency and Humanitarian Action are otherwise insufficient.

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95. The CAP process is a distinct improvement over the confused proliferation of individual appeals that were the norm in past emergencies.[42] A Fact Sheet and financial summary sheet is being created for each consolidated appeal, as part of the Consolidated Appeal Process Evaluation presently under way. The study is expected to be finalised by the end of 1995. Problems with the rapid functioning of this mechanism (and its procedures) relate principally to its capacity for fast action, however. Improvements of the Consolidated Appeal could be achieved in at least the following three areas: (a) timing (b) coordination; and (c) formulation of the Consolidated Appeal draft.

96. Timing. The inter-agency consultations required to define the membership of an assessment mission are often protracted. Obtaining inter-agency agreement on those findings that should be included or excluded from an Appeal is also time consuming. A minimum period of ten working days is usually required for the preparation of a draft which, before it is finalised, must meet the approval of the Headquarters of the agencies that participated in the related assessment mission. In addition, time is needed to produce Appeal documents in sufficient numbers for distribution to all Member States. In turn, they need sufficient time to study the document and decide on their contributions.

97. The preparation of the draft and final Appeal document is, moreover, a labour intensive exercise. This stage of the process could be significantly shortened if DHA would assign more resources to analyse and compile data from assessment missions and to prepare and distribute final versions of the Appeal. An efficient electronic means to transmit the first and final drafts of the Appeal documents to the agencies and Member States could also be a significant time-saver.

98. Coordination. Relief operational agencies cooperate during the appeals process, but cooperation between the appeal periods is rather limited. Agencies (and Coordinators) should maintain inter-agency, joint needs assessment and programming work throughout the year. DHA should also emphasize inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness in such processes and encourage NGOs' involvement.

99. The Consolidated Appeal draft. There is still a long way to go before the tightly-prepared appeals also reflect a true prioritisation of activities. The integration of agency activities and priorities is heavily based on the respective agency mandates. Too often the Consolidated Appeals simply juxtapose the proposed programmes of individual agencies, when more joint needs-assessment and thorough review is required for coordinated response.

100. A review of resources mobilized to date through the consolidated appeals, for example, shows a clear trend among donors to support food, logistics, and emergency assistance for displaced populations (particularly refugees), but lesser funding and support for the special non-food sectors (health, water/sanitation, agricultural inputs).[43]

101. Inter-agency consultations should focus on the following:

(a) Identifying ways to generate greater attention to increased funding for non-food sectors mentioned above and rehabilitation, recovery and prevention of emergencies through vulnerability reduction;

(b) Increasing and encouraging donors' willingness to make contributions, by proving that the funds required are not overestimated; and

(c) Working with the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) to address development funding needs and create a Consolidated Appeal draft which also includes development funding. This is in order to present donors with a truly comprehensive request for funding and reduce Donors' response time for rehabilitation requirements - which traditionally have been addressed separately from emergency appeals.

(d) At the same time, inter-agency consultations should also involve UNDP's efforts to bring a greater degree of coherence to international initiatives to support rehabilitation and recovery. (The post-crisis environment usually requires firm domestic and international resource allocation decisions. UNDP is arranging discussions for this purpose, with major donors, the World Bank, within the United Nations system and with operational relief and development agencies.)

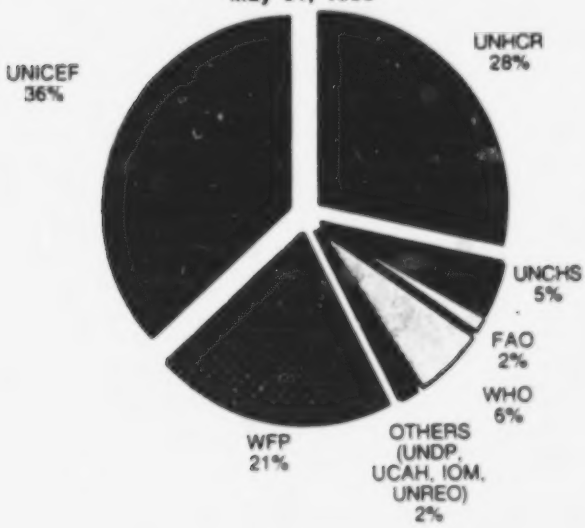
### 3. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund

102. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), established by General Assembly 46/182, has served as a predominant source of funding for United Nations agencies in the critical initial phase of emergencies to supplement their own emergency funding capacity. It is meant to allow rapid action in the face of immediate humanitarian needs before donor funds are available. The CERF is managed by DHA, New York, under the authority of the Secretary-General, by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in his capacity as Emergency Relief Coordinator. Spending authority has been delegated to the Coordinator in order to ensure that prompt responses can be made in emergency situations. At the end of 1994, for example, humanitarian agencies had drawn US $110 million from CERF to fund rapid emergency relief on more than 30 occasions. Ninety per cent (90%) of that sum has been paid back into the Fund.

103. The Relief Coordination Branch of DHA believes that a study should be undertaken to lay down the modalities for use of the CERF in complex emergencies and for major cases of natural disaster. The Inspector would like to express her support for such a study. The level of resources of the CERF and certain constraints in its utilization still need to be addressed to ensure its continued effectiveness. At the 49th General Assembly session, Member States addressed these concerns and the need to increase CERF resources and ensure that they are adequate at any time to respond to new emergencies.[44]

104. In an effort to ensure the timely replenishment of the CERF and the recovery of advances, DHA has taken steps to strengthen existing procedures in order to shorten the period for reimbursement, encourage partial repayment whenever possible, and draw the attention of donors in consolidated appeals prior to the utilization of the CERF. These efforts are certainly in the right direction. Other proposals have included authorizing the judicious use of the CERF, in compelling circumstances, for meeting critical humanitarian requirements of protracted emergencies as well as creating an additional window of US$30 million within the CERF to support immediate recovery and transition activities undertaken by organizations of the United Nations system. Any increase in the CERF fund, however, while well warranted, would be ineffective without guarantees for its timely replenishment. The proposal to create an additional window of US $ 30 million in the CERF for immediate recovery and transition activities was not adopted, however, by ECOSOC.

**Organizations receiving advances from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) May 31, 1995**




## 4. Other coordination mechanisms

105. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) is a group of funding agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, and IFAD) chaired informally by a different agency each year. It has an important role in the implementation of elements of the General Assembly Resolution 47/199 on items such as the establishment of common premises, harmonisation of programming cycles, broadening of the Resident Coordinator System pool, standardisation of programming terminology, all of which have improved functioning of field activities and the interaction of JCGP organizations. To promote understanding and harmonisation of approaches to humanitarian relief operations, the last high level JCGP meeting of March 1995, in Rome, for example, discussed issues such as the relief/development continuum in Africa and United Nations strategies for coping with refugees and displaced persons.

106. UNHCR, which has sought and gained observer status on the JCGP, considers its involvement adequate. DHA is not a member of the JCGP. This implies, however, that the JCGP has to work to avoid overlap with other coordinating bodies and to involve DHA and UNHCR whenever necessary - one for its coordination function and the other for its extensive representation in the field. Any concrete results would otherwise be limited.

107. Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit. DHA and UNEP have initiated this joint unit to fill gaps in the international response to environmental aspects of emergencies. This Joint Unit is funded and staffed by UNEP and integrated into the Relief Coordination Branch of DHA, Geneva. The Unit provides a rapid response capacity for environmental emergencies such as chemical and oil spills. The Unit also has agreed to interface procedures with relevant United Nations system bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and, the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals to streamline the response mechanism to environmental emergencies as much as possible.

## C. Field operations

108. All the agencies agree that the national government is, in principle, responsible for the coordination of all international assistance. In most situations where there is a functioning, effective government administration, the United Nations should be able to support the government's own coordinating bodies, or assure country level coordination on behalf of the government and with the involvement of government representatives. The Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and the United Nations Disaster Management Team are there to give government support as required. However, the absence or weakening of government and indigenous structures greatly complicates the coordination and provision of humanitarian assistance.

109. Some relief agencies believe that in exceptional situations where there is no effective government, where governance is contested, or different parts of the country are under the control or administration of different competing groups, the United Nations must step in. Acting on behalf of the international community as a whole, it has to assume some of the overall coordination functions normally handled by the sovereign government, and maintain whatever relations are feasible with the various parties, on a pragmatic basis. However, this undermines any remaining self-reliance of the given country.

110. The United Nations Resident Coordinator and the in-country United Nations Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT), according to the IASC, serve as the first line of initial response to a new emergency, and should normally have established mechanisms of coordination prior to the onset of the complex emergency. The UN-DMT, chaired by DHA, brings together the United Nations agencies present in the affected country and often includes NGOs.[45] If and once appointed, the Humanitarian Coordinator will consequently utilize and build upon these DMT mechanisms as required in the performance of his/her duties for complex emergencies.

### 1. Field coordination structures

111. The coordination structures in the field vary according to each emergency situation and may or may not be part of the UNDP Country Offices located in almost every corner of the globe. There are cases where the UNDP Country Office is expanded to include support for the Resident Coordinators and/or Humanitarian Coordinators. If there is a Humanitarian Coordinator appointed, for example, his/her office is staffed by DHA, depending on what is lacking or available at the UNDP Country Office. In Haiti, for example, there is a Humanitarian Affairs Officer in the UNDP Country Office.

112. There are cases where the Humanitarian Coordinator's office is separate, and other cases where it is part of the Peace-Keeping Operations office. In Rwanda, for example, the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office, DHA, (UNREO) was a separate entity from the UNDP Country Office and functioned on voluntary contributions. On the other hand, the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Operation in Mozambique (UNOHAC), the DHA field office, was a component of the broader United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) and was financed from assessed peace-keeping contributions and not voluntary contributions from Member States. Similarly, in Burundi, where there is no UNDP Country Office, two humanitarian affairs officers sit in the Office of the SRSG.

113. There has been an attempt by DHA to identify and establish general trends for the different types of support field offices and coordination structures. In general, the types of coordination offices established in the field include the following:

(a) Onsite Operations Coordination Centres (OSOCCs), are usually established for natural disasters. However, there are exceptions to this: in Rwanda an OSOCC was used although it was a complex emergency. The OSOCC indicates that there is some form of government stability.

(b) Field Coordination Units (FCUs) have been established by DHA in countries affected by small complex emergencies, such as in non-independent states (NIS). These FCUs were established in response to specific appeals from major donor nations for the creation of umbrella inter-agency structures "on the ground." A reporting system has been instituted among some FCUs whereby regular updates of major political, economic and humanitarian developments are forwarded to DHA Geneva and New York for review. These reports are used to brief the donors and the public on developments and shifting foci of relief needs. They also serve as valuable reference material for the preparation of regular situation updates on humanitarian activities provided to the United Nations system and donor community.

(c) Humanitarian Operations Centres (HOCs) are used in larger complex emergencies, as in Somalia, where all the humanitarian relief representatives are involved.

114. Recent attempts have also been made to provide standard arrangements for the field offices required, depending on the type of emergency they are expected to serve. For planning purposes, three types of "notional coordination structures" have been identified to support the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in the field. While not officially approved, they are outlined below as a sample of the pragmatic type of support needed and the field offices possible in smaller to larger and complex emergencies.

115. The first type of field office would be for a pre-crisis or incipient emergency situation. In the pre-crisis situation, the coordination arrangements are possibly already in place with a United Nations Resident Coordinator, but require reinforcement staff to cope with a potential or small-scale humanitarian emergency. The reinforcement would be for emergency assessment, contingency planning, and increased information flow.

116. The second type of field office would be for a growing humanitarian crisis or a newly declared complex emergency whose dimensions and anticipated duration are not clear. Here the situation calls for more formal coordination arrangements to be established and/or intensive planning to support anticipated or early phases of humanitarian response. The coordination efforts are then led by either a United Nations Resident Coordinator or a formally designated United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator. The alert would be sent out for stand-by capacities, for coordination personnel and equipment, and the deployment of small numbers of staff.

117. The third type of field office would be for a full blown emergency characterized by large scale human crisis and requiring a major humanitarian response from United Nations agencies, NGOs and other international organizations, and involving expanded activities and staff support. In this case, a complex emergency is recognized by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and a United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator is appointed. The field presence required is beyond the capital city. There is an increased demand for assessment, planning,

support to humanitarian organizations, communications, and information requirements. Special unit requirements may also be needed for coordination for internally displaced persons or demining programmes or both.

**2. Leadership**

118. In complex emergencies, "faced by situations that offer limited opportunities for resolution, the "value-added" of coordination is (often) jeopardised. Indirectly, frequently the solutions that have been posited to resolve such impediments, for example the involvement of special representatives to seek solutions with political authorities, frequently confuses the roles of political and humanitarian intervention. A bevy of coordinators appear on the emergency scene with roles that do not necessarily cohere."[46]

119. The United Nations Resident Coordinator. The United Nations Resident Coordinator - who is often the UNDP Resident Representative - acts at the country level on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and is expected to exercise team leadership among the organizations of the United Nations system. He/she, according to General Assembly Resolution 46/182, facilitates the preparedness of the United Nations system and assists in a speedy transition from relief to development. "He/she normally coordinates the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level and also assumes overall responsibility for, and coordination of, the system's operational activities for development carried out at the country level."[47] He/she "chairs the Disaster Management Team; oversees United Nations personnel safety and security; participates in an early-warning monitoring group; and leads the representatives of other United Nations agencies."[48] Where no Humanitarian Coordinator is formally designated, the Resident Coordinator carries out the functions with regard to emergencies - including complex emergencies.[49] For all emergency relief related activities, the Resident Coordinator reports to and works under the guidance of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and keeps DPA, DPKO and UNDP well informed, as appropriate. He/she also reports to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General where he/she is appointed.[50]

120. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary machinery are responsible for supporting the functioning of the resident coordinator system.[51] The UNDP Office of the United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS), which became operational in October 1994, also heads and coordinates all the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the field.[52]

121. According to UNDP, United Nations Resident Coordinators responsible for coordinating United Nations system activities at the country level have responsibilities relating to (a) emergency prevention, (b) relief, and (c) curative development and include the following:

(a) Emergency Prevention:

1. Use the country strategy note and other programming and reporting instruments to identify the level of the country's vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters and initiate, with the DMT and national authorities, disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

2. In consultation with DPA, DHA and UNDP and in cooperation with the country DMT, develop and maintain an early-warning system which would put governments and the international community on the alert;

3. In cooperation with DHA and UNDP organize the Disaster Management Training Programme and support follow-up activities of the Government in building national capacities for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

4. In countries with a high level of vulnerability and potential crisis, complement preventive diplomacy with quick impact development projects and programmes to be formulated by UNDP and other United Nations agencies, as appropriate, and coordinate initiatives designed to head off looming natural and other disasters;

5. In countries with a high possibility of an emergency or crisis, and in full cooperation with national authorities, lead in the formulation of United Nations development appeals to mobilize international resources for United Nations preventive development initiatives.

(b) Relief:

1. The Resident Coordinator must inform UNDP Headquarters of any additional resource needs, including personnel requirements, in order to perform the Humanitarian Coordinator's function while maintaining the optimal level of development presence;

2. In all cases when the Resident Coordinator is leading a resource mobilization effort for prevention and development aspects, such appeals should be carried out in full coordination with DHA-led consolidated appeals.

(c) Curative development:

1. Work to bring the United Nations system and other development assistance entities together in coordinated efforts to assist the country in reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

2. Mobilize the United Nations System to assist national authorities in preparing and formulating a strategy and programme for national reconstruction and rehabilitation leading to sustainable human development [53]

122. The Humanitarian Coordinator. The Humanitarian Coordinator - who may or may not be the United Nations Resident Coordinator according to the IASC Terms of Reference - serves as "the direct representative of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (or USG for Humanitarian Affairs, DHA), for matters dealing with complex emergencies. If a Special Representative of the Secretary-General is appointed for the country in question, however, the Humanitarian Coordinator will function under the overall authority of the SRSG. The Humanitarian Coordinator, moreover, has to report directly to his/her agency headquarters if it has been designated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator as the lead agency for the provision of humanitarian assistance.[54]

123. The primary function of the Humanitarian Coordinator "is to facilitate and ensure the quick, effective and well coordinated provision of humanitarian assistance to those seriously affected by the complex emergency in question."[55] He/she is responsible for establishing the basic division of labour at the onset of an emergency, not only within the United Nations system agencies, but also (as far as possible) with other entities, and ensuring that such efforts are carried out.[56] The IASC Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Coordinator include:

(a) Convening and serving as the Chair for meetings of the DMT in country to deal with matters relating to the complex emergency in question and providing the necessary secretariat support to the DMT.

(b) Reaching agreement on the basic division of responsibilities among the United Nations system agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates and capacities, as well as working with the other relief entities to facilitate such agreements within the larger relief community.

(c) Ensuring that effective inter-agency coordination within specific sector areas is undertaken by the relevant agencies and that coordination of the overall logistics of the relief operation is effectively undertaken.

(d) Acting as a focal point for discussion within the relief community regarding policy issues of inter-agency concern, e.g., wage levels for local staff, difficulties with customs procedures and policies, government clearances for travel and passes, and as an interlocutor with the relevant parties.

(e) Facilitating the provision of key support services for the larger relief community, such as telecommunications and transportation.

(f) Ensuring consultation with government and national authorities on matters regarding the planning and implementation of humanitarian assistance.

(g) Facilitating communications, and ensuring overall coordination, between the United Nations system and other humanitarian aid agencies on the one hand and the relevant components of bilateral military forces and/or those of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, when such forces are present, including promoting resolution of matters of joint concern to the humanitarian aid agencies.

(h) Monitoring humanitarian needs and identifying specific gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance, and working with United Nations and other entities to ensure that such gaps are addressed before they reach the crisis point.

(i) Facilitating ongoing strategic planning for the relief effort, including the provision of early-warning of major changes in needs or delivery capacities and contingency planning for such eventualities.

(j) Monitoring and facilitating United Nations humanitarian assistance to special population groups, e.g., internally displaced persons, demobilized soldiers, to ensure that it is provided in an adequate and timely manner. He/she is also responsible for coordinating such United Nations efforts (unless such coordination has been delegated by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to a specific agency).

(k) Cooperating with entities responsible for planning and implementation of rehabilitation and development activities, to ensure that rehabilitation actions begin as soon as they become feasible and that relief actions are planned and undertaken with the perspective of their longer-term impacts.

124. In addition, the Humanitarian Coordinator, according to the IASC, is expected to coordinate the preparation of an overall humanitarian assistance strategy and Plan of Action

of United Nations system agencies, including the establishment of priorities for assistance and agreed collaborative approaches, and to coordinate revisions and modifications as required by the changing conditions and needs. He/she should coordinate the preparation of inter-agency consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance for the complex emergency in question and work with the agencies both in-country and at headquarters level to ensure that the actions are implemented. Finally, he/she should monitor the provision of resources against such appeals, bringing donor attention to important outstanding gaps, and facilitating inter-agency resource mobilization efforts both in-country as well as at the headquarters level.

125. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). "The SRSG is to provide leadership and coordination of policy and operational objectives, while respecting the existence of ongoing humanitarian operations under standing mandates from the General Assembly. Consequently, the SRSG is to ensure appropriate consultation and coordination arrangements at the country level, and to see that the various parties involved in humanitarian activities maintain a close dialogue with all those involved in peace-keeping operations."[57] The SRSG relies on the Resident Coordinator or/and the Humanitarian Coordinator in-country.

126. There are no official terms of reference for the SRSG. He/she is considered by agencies to be the highest ranking United Nations official in-country to represent United Nations interests, and the principal in-country focus for political, humanitarian, military and other United Nations action. WHO sees the SRSG as having the responsibility of both peace-keeping and humanitarian response operations. UNHCR considers the role of the Special Representative to be one of political leadership and direction and overall coordination of all United Nations system efforts in the country concerned. According to DPA the SRSG should have overall responsibility for humanitarian emergency programmes in the field, in coordination with DHA, and provide policy guidance on the operation he/she heads.

127. The Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Emergency Relief Coordinator who has as tools for coordination the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Consolidated Appeals, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and a register of stand-by capacities, is designated by the Secretary-General to work closely and in cooperation with the relevant organizations and entities of the System dealing with humanitarian assistance and maintain close contact with and provide leadership to the resident coordinators in-country. General Assembly Resolution 46/182 established the following responsibilities for the Emergency Relief Coordinator who is the USG for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs:

(a) Process requests from affected Member States for emergency assistance requiring a coordinated response;

(b) Maintain an overview of all emergencies through, inter alia, the systematic pooling and analysis of early-warning information to facilitate humanitarian assistance of the United Nations to those emergencies that require a coordinated response;

(c) Organize, in consultation with the Government of the affected country, a joint inter-agency needs-assessment mission and prepare a consolidated appeal to be issued by the Secretary-General, to be followed by periodic situation reports including information on all sources of external assistance;

(d) Actively facilitate, including through negotiation if needed, access by the operational organizations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance, by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned;

(e) Manage, in consultation with the operational organizations concerned, the central emergency revolving fund, and assist in the mobilization of resources;

(f) Serve as a central focal point with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerning United Nations emergency relief operations and, when appropriate and necessary, mobilize their emergency relief capacities, including through consultations in his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

(g) Provide consolidated information, including early-warning on emergencies, to all interested Governments and concerned authorities, particularly affected and disaster-prone countries, drawing on the capacities of the organizations of the system and other available sources;

(h) Actively promote, in close collaboration with concerned organizations, the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction as relief operations under his/her aegis are phased out;

(i) Prepare an annual report for the Secretary-General on the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance, including information on the central emergency revolving fund, to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

128. Other staff functions. There have been other roles identified in the field but to date there are no official terms of reference available. Descriptions of roles have been initiated, however, by DHA and by UNDP for at least the following: the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator; Senior Relief Officer; Operations Officer; Humanitarian Affairs Officer; Planning and Assessment Officer; NGO Liaison Officer; Administrative Officer; Logistics Officer; Internally Displaced Persons Officer; Communications Officer; Communications Technician; Communications Operator; Demining Officer; and Air Operations Officer.

129. The Lead Agency. According to DHA, the term "lead agency" comes from customary usage within the United Nations system and not from legal or legislative definition. Lead agency has come to denote an agency that is in charge of a particular set of activities, in a specific in-country situation, which also involves the secondary collaborative support of other agencies. In crises which are primarily dominated by an activity which relates to the mandate of a particular agency, as in large population movements, UNHCR, for example, will have a dominant role and its representative will most probably be chosen as the Humanitarian Coordinator. To some, this ensures an early coordination presence. Taken within an in-country context, DHA is the United Nations' "lead agency" to address the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance.

130. The lead agency concept is advantageous in complex emergencies whenever the following is true:

(a) The lead agency has the largest presence , is already present on the ground, and can ensure informed coordination at the early stages of the emergency;

(b) Resources for coordination activities are in place and do not need to be created, minimising both costs and the potential for additional bureaucracy;

(c) The lead agency has both added credibility and negotiating power in pursuing coordination functions with government counterparts and other agencies.

131. The choice of lead agency thus depends on the specific situation. UNHCR's role as the lead agency in several refugee, Internally Displaced Persons, and/or returnee situations is a highly positive one. Other operational agencies, such as FAO and WFP, would be equally suited to assume similar lead agency roles in the field of agriculture relief, rehabilitation, and emergency food distribution respectively. In a lead agency perspective, the other operational agencies would be seconded to serve as support units and provide more manpower for common tasks at hand. The lead agency concept can therefore help further mobilize efforts under one United Nations banner. However, it requires further clarification and operational definition from the coordinating mechanisms available at Headquarters and in the field.

### 3. Stand-by human resources available to DHA

132. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team. The UNDAC Stand-by Team is comprised of 41 emergency management experts and DHA Relief Coordination Officers made available by twelve European donor countries, on permanent stand-by. DHA is about to add a Latin American-based group to its UNDAC Team.

133. When a major, sudden disaster occurs, the UNDAC Stand-by Team is usually dispatched to the disaster site to assist the local and national authorities, Resident Coordinator, and the UN-DMT in determining needs for international assistance and, when required, to undertake on-site coordination. Its on-site assessment includes the nature of the disaster; damage, including secondary threats; effects on the population; ongoing relief activities and local response capacity; needs for international assistance; means of delivering international assistance; and expected developments.[58]

134. The UNDAC Stand-by Team, since its creation in 1993, has been used mostly in natural disasters. It can, however, be used in complex emergencies, as the experience in Rwanda and the assessment procedures outlined below indicate. In 1994, for example, the Team was used as part of DHA's response to the Rwanda emergency and sent to Kigali where it established an Onsite Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) which is still in operation at the printing of this report.

135. Successful assessment procedures in natural disasters can and should also be used in complex emergencies. These include: (a) identifying information that is vital to the users of the assessment i.e., the Resident Coordinator; (b) the application of standard baselines to assess impact i.e., daily death rates compared to international standards; and (c) prioritizing urgent vs. chronic needs. In prioritizing needs, the assessment would have to differentiate between what is normal for the location and what is occurring as a result of the disaster, (which could be civil war), so that emergency food aid, health care and other assistance can be provided at the appropriate level. The assessment team would also have to be aware of pressures from the affected country and others to identify needs. A recommendation of "no additional assistance is required" for example, may, be warranted in spite of media or political coverage to the contrary.[59]

136. The following procedures are the guidelines used in UNDAC assessment missions.

(a) An initial situation-and-needs assessment is required at an early and critical stage to identify at least the following: the impact of the emergency; the vulnerable segments of the population; the level of response by the affected country and its internal capacity to cope; the level of response from the international community; the most urgent needs and potential methods of providing them effectively; and the geographic areas needing in-depth assessment.

(b) An inter-agency mission, separate from the UNDAC Stand-by Team, is sent for an in-depth analysis of medium-and long term rehabilitation/reconstruction needs emanating from an emergency.

(c) In case of emergencies such as earthquakes which involve collapsed structures, the first priority is to determine the need for international Search and Rescue Teams (SAR). If such a need exists, the Team issues a recommendation for mobilization and organizes on-site coordination of international efforts.

(d) This initial data collection is necessary before recommendations to define and set priorities for action can be taken. Recommendations should be simple, support the use of local materials and systems and be sustainable - as much as possible - by the affected country.[60]

137. In addition, checklists which have been developed as tools to guide the UNDAC team in its assessment efforts can be utilized in complex emergencies. The checklists, designed mainly for sudden natural disasters (earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions, floods, etc.) include basic data necessary for other emergencies. The structure of the checklist corresponds to the structure of both the Field Situation Reports provided by the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator to DHA and the DHA Situation Reports sent out from Geneva to the disaster management community worldwide.[61]

138. The International Search and Rescue teams. In case of emergencies involving collapsed structures, as in a major earthquake affecting urban areas, DHA, in consultation with UNDP, alerts the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) to send Search and Rescue (SAR) teams to a disaster site. The teams are sent from various countries to organize on-site coordination of international efforts. INSARAG is a network of some ten countries and consists of a Steering Group, three regional groups (for Africa/Europe, the Americas and Asia/Pacific), and interregional working groups.

139. Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA). MCDA are the relief personnel, equipment, supplies and services provided by foreign military and civil defence organizations for international disaster relief assistance.[62] According to agreed procedures from the Oslo Guidelines of May 1994, and within the framework of provisions of General Assembly Resolution 46/182, the MCDA provide know-how and relief capacities including aircraft, helicopters, ships, nuclear/biological/chemical decontamination facilities, and field hospitals to cope with the effects of major emergencies. Their structures are intended to react quickly and respond rapidly in a self-contained, self-sufficient, and highly mobile fashion.[63]

140. In principle, the MCDA on disaster relief missions are unarmed and serve in their national uniforms. In cases of natural disaster, responsibility for adequate security for MCDA support remains with the Receiving State. MCDA assistance is provided at no cost and is

covered by funds other than those available for international development activities.[64] National military, civil defence and civil protection personnel and expertise have enormous potential to assist DHA and the major United Nations system relief agencies in the implementation of their humanitarian mandates and for the effective delivery of relief assistance, including complex emergencies.[65]

141. White Helmets (WH). Stand-by arrangements for responding to natural disasters, such as the UNDAC and MCDA appear adequate. For complex emergencies and for rehabilitation and recovery stages of humanitarian relief, there is room for improvement. A recent initiative by the UNV and Argentina is the concept of the White Helmets (WH) for initial emergency response and early stages of rehabilitation. The WH could facilitate mobilization of existing local expertise, revitalize previously constituted local NGOs and community based organizations, as well as help in the organization and promotion of new arrangements.[66] In this respect, the Secretary of State of Argentina stated to ECOSOC: "The appeal of the White Helmets proposal resides in the fact that its actions transcend national boundaries and are intended to be integrated into the activities of the United Nations in the provision of emergency aid and development cooperation."[67]

142. Based on past experience where UNV, in collaboration with United Nations bodies, have assisted in a wide range of activities, WH deployment could include the following:

(a) Assuring delivery of urgent food and non-food relief supplies (e.g. housing) and services (e.g. basic health, sanitation, epidemiology) to victims of forced migration;

(b) Providing support to local emergency relief coordination units, including necessary skills and local managerial capacity to support effective access to afflicted populations;

(c) Assisting in registration for return, and in logistical and technical arrangements for resettlement and repatriation, of refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs);

(d) Assisting in monitoring respect for, and enabling protection of, human rights, together with measures for confidence building and conflict prevention and/or resolution at the community level;

(e) Assisting in demobilizing, retraining and reintegration efforts;

(f) Supporting the reorganization/operation of local services (for example, health centres, food distribution, and housing); and

(g) Enabling the victims of forced population movements to return to their countries of origin or to integrate in their countries of refuge.[68]

143. The initiative by DHA to use the Consolidated Appeal Process for White Helmets-related fund raising is a good one. Once the WH initiative becomes operational and volunteer teams are available for field assignments, it would be feasible to include within the CAP appeals a provision for the use of WH volunteers in United Nations operations.[69] The basic training programme required for WH volunteers is also a positive development. It includes training in disaster management and objectives; disaster and risk assessment; displaced persons in civil conflict; information management and communications; and stress management.

144. The WH initiative should be seriously considered for reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Within the United Nations system the Representative of the Secretary-General for IDPs handles internally displaced persons issues. The Representative has compiled and evaluated valid legal norms for the protection of IDPs and the identification of lacunae in the existing international law and international humanitarian law. The IASC is also in the process of reviewing issues relating to internally displaced persons and providing recommendations to the IASC and its Working Group, through the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator.

**4. Peace-keeping forces as stand-by for humanitarian assistance**

145. Peace-keeping has been defined as the deployment of a United Nations presence in an area of conflict, with the consent of the States or where relevant, other entities concerned, and as an interim arrangement to contain fighting, prevent the resumption of hostilities, and restore international peace and security. The functions of peace-keeping, have traditionally included observance of a cease-fire, or agreement on demarcation lines or withdrawal of forces. In recent years they have widened to include monitoring of elections, delivery of humanitarian supplies, assistance in the national reconciliation process and rebuilding of a State's social, economic and administrative infrastructure.[70] Peace-keeping activities are expected to be undertaken with the consent of the parties, to use force only in self-defence, and to maintain impartiality in the conflict.[71] All three of these principles have been subject to new interpretations, if not abolished, in recent major peace-keeping operations.[72]

146. Peace-keeping is not to be confused with peace-enforcement which is a Chapter VII mandated operation carried out by United Nations forces or by States, groups of States, or regional arrangements on the basis of an invitation of the State concerned or an authorization by the Security Council. Peace-inforcers have a clear combat mission and are empowered to use coercive measures to carry out their mandate.[73]

147. Humanitarian agencies resort to stand-by human resources and peace-keeping forces in exceptional circumstances and when the other resources at the disposal of the agencies prove inadequate. The implications for humanitarian principles that can arise from the use of military assets or through cooperation with military forces in emergencies are complex and many. However, for the military to provide useful support, particularly in the early phase of a complex emergency, the following can be suggested:

(a) Implement less intrusive forms of interaction as done successfully in the Rwanda crisis. This involved providing military support at the request of, and in line with, the needs of the humanitarian operations.

(b) Consider having military forces dressed in civilian clothes when escorting humanitarian convoys, to divert some attention away from the operation, and serve as discrete diplomacy.

(c) Use military forces in mine clearance programmes and in roads repair and irrigation systems, to help in confidence building and demonstrate impartiality.[74]

148. The ICRC, for example, has won its long-established acceptance, credibility and effectiveness due to its visible support of several fundamental principles. The ICRC has been entrusted by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols with upholding

international humanitarian law, whose sole objective is to protect the victims of all conflicts, whatever the reason for or the legality of the use of force and whatever forces are on the ground.[75] The red cross emblem signals that this mission has clear intentions, that its sole aim is to protect and assist all victims without regard for any consideration except the urgency of their need, that it is independent of any political power or motivation, and that it would never take sides in the dispute between the combatants.[76]

**5. NGOs and local structures as alternatives to militarization**

149. It is only natural that the United Nations should seek out as partners the talent and flexibility of operational NGOs, especially those with a documented history of working in war zones. There are several reasons for this. United Nations agencies are stretched to the limit, and for budgetary and other reasons, mentioned later, are unable to quickly redistribute staff resources among programmes or to rapidly increase existing staffing levels. NGOs have the flexibility to re-deploy and expand faster.[77]

150. NGOs, while not represented in the Security Council, have a significant indirect influence in the corridors of the United Nations in New York and in the capitals of key Council Member States. They have a strong capacity to alert the media and public opinion. They represent an invaluable source of information on complex emergencies due to their direct contacts in the field, informal exchanges in and around embassies, and frequent contact with Ministries and the media in donor capitals. These linkages between the non-governmental and governmental spheres of activity are a novel and welcome feature of the United Nations scene and would have been impossible only five years ago.[78]

151. Moreover, in terms of net financial transfers, an increasing volume of official funding is being channelled through NGOs to developing countries.[79] NGOs collectively represent the second largest source of development and relief assistance, after bilateral donors. This shift in funding may be a manifestation of the growing impatience with the perceived ineffectiveness of United Nations organizations and of the corresponding faith in the operational superiority and hands-on approach of NGOs.[80]

152. Agencies such as UNHCR, and to a lesser extent FAO, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP, engage NGOs as privileged implementing partners in crisis relief situations. UNHCR, for example, also tries, when possible, not to rely exclusively on international NGOs, but on local skills and other dedicated NGOs to implement its programmes. These organizations receive all their funding from UNHCR and for all practical purposes are totally under its control. The disadvantage, however, is that the staff of these organizations are not United Nations staff and, therefore, have lesser protection in high security risk areas.[81]

153. One good example of United Nations partnership with dedicated NGOs is the demining programme in Afghanistan. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) first set up facilities to train Afghan deminers in Pakistan. This was done with the help of military experts provided by several donor countries and with the logistical support of the Pakistani army. Several thousand deminers were trained. UNOCHA drew up the terms of reference and created from scratch several Afghan NGOs to implement the programme. They were fully funded by the United Nations and staffed by Afghans, with a small number of expatriate consultants. Overall coordination was provided by UNOCHA's demining programme officers. A Mine Clearance Planning Agency was created as were several regionally based mine clearance agencies, under the supervision of the Planning Agency.

## D. Actions needed

154. Coordination requirements can range from adding specialized staff to existing coordination arrangements to the establishment of elaborate coordination structures. The many variables which may be present in any particular crisis have, so far, prevented advance designation of any standard coordination arrangements, particularly in the field. Recent efforts to refine coordination and coordination mechanisms have dealt more with headquarter-levels than with the field-level. The creation of new or renewed emergency divisions in most of the major operational organizations, for example, is positive in principle, as are DHA's Planning and Policy Division and its Rapid Response Unit. The challenge, however, is to translate inter-agency coordination at the Headquarters level into practical guidelines and standard operating procedures in the field, and then apply these guidelines to better manage complex humanitarian operations as a whole.

155. To identify guidelines for successful coordination in the field, the following possible common denominators and factors are provided as a few examples:

(a) Field support is provided at the earliest stage possible - with initial support at the first sign of a pending humanitarian crisis and prior to the onset of a complex emergency.

(b) All relevant United Nations specialised agencies whose expertise and experience may be required to fully assess the most urgent needs are involved at the very beginning of the emergency. Contacts with all humanitarian organizations present in the country, including NGOs and other organizations are established immediately. The Resident Coordinator, with the United Nations Disaster Management Team, ensures a regular and complete flow of information of activities of all humanitarian partners. The host government, to the extent possible, provides support and is actively involved in the coordination of the relief assistance. A Humanitarian Coordinator is designated, as soon as possible, once a complex emergency has been established or recognized.

(c) The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) provides the basis for integrated programmes and for cooperative efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance. The involvement of all humanitarian organizations in the field in the CAP (whether or not they may have projects included within the Consolidated Appeal) is essential to achieve a coordinated programme of humanitarian assistance.

(d) There is strong support from all Headquarters to the field coordination structure, which is essential to reinforce the field level coordination efforts.

(e) Coordination is not dependent solely on personalities, goodwill and intellectual leadership, but on the availability of resources and locally usable funds.[82]

156. DHA must also tighten its managerial and institutional grip on the coordination of particularly complex emergencies. Some agencies consider that DHA should increase its selectivity, and be more consistent in its division of labour between the various inter-agency fora. These agencies argue that DHA has, for example, a tendency to deal only with UNHCR and WFP. According to others, the meetings with DHA are often just briefings, with no redistribution of assignments or responsibilities between agencies.

157. To distribute labour more effectively, less emphasis should be placed on mandates and more on tasks at hand in order to cover the needs of all the people concerned at the

same time and in the same way. But due to the high degree of operational autonomy enjoyed by the various United Nations system agencies, this change would have to come by consensus. The traditional reluctance to be coordinated, (to a certain degree) has prevented DHA from exercising in many cases effective coordination.[83]

158. On the other hand, it is also important that DHA avoid taking on a fully operational role at the field level, since this would clearly duplicate the functions of other United Nations agencies and defeat the whole purpose of a coordinating entity. Field level operations should, to the extent possible, rely on the capacities of other relief partners, particularly when stop-gaps are required. DHA should then rely on the standby human resources made available to it to help support the operational agencies.

159. At the field or in-country level, Military and Civil Defence Assets have already been successfully applied in emergency operations, including for example Georgia, Rwanda and Moldova. The worry is, however, not whether human resources are available as such, but whether coordination of an increasing number of participants is possible. At any rate, people should not be sent to the field with no notion of their objectives.

160. At the field level, too many people are involved. Distinctions have to be made between the various field functions and relative titles in such a manner as to avoid all confusion. A redefinition of roles, and if necessary, a fewer number of coordinators and sub-coordinators in the field may be warranted. Once the optimum number of coordinators is achieved, the terms of reference for all the positions in the field, other than for the Humanitarian Coordinator for example, are essential, but are yet to be clearly implemented. These should serve as clear and definite terms of conduct and be tested and compared against other field positions. The delineation of some roles and responsibilities of the various field positions has been initiated, as for Rwanda, but has not been standardised, either in the field or at Headquarters.

161. Prior to their field participation, field coordinators and all field officers should be given regular disaster management training. The Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) and the Complex Emergencies Training Initiative (CETI) are positive steps in that direction and should be reinforced and provided as essential pre-requisites for all field personnel. (See Chapter IV. A. on DMTP and CETI.)

162. Leadership positions in the field, should also be delegated signature authority for management of coordination funds, as is the case with UNICEF Country Representatives, who have total authority over their budgets and sufficient authority as to limit the need for second-guessing by Headquarters. Once given executive authority, they should of course be held accountable.

163. Competition among various agencies and organizations, and the tendency of certain states to engage in undisciplined bilateral action, constitute obstacles that must be overcome. The concentration of humanitarian agencies in a few theatres of operation while other situations are neglected, and their subsequent withdrawal without any provision having been made for the transition to development programmes, are also examples of poor coordination and unsatisfactory planning that still have to be addressed.[84]

164. To minimize this competition, enhance effective cooperation, minimize overlap, and hence get more value for the resources available, clearer mandates and processes are

required. The parallel role, requirements and resource mobilization capabilities of the United Nations agencies, as well as the role of NGOs, should also be factored into the equation.

165. In formulating such an equation for effective field operations' management, regular round-table meetings should be held to discuss and reconsider priority issues for relief and humanitarian assistance. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee could convene these at least twice a year to assess the status and progress of all humanitarian assistance operations under way.

## IV. PLANNING AND PREVENTION NEEDS

166. In many disasters, the attention of the donor community is focused on the provision of disaster relief. Rehabilitation and preventive aspects of disaster management generally receive less attention and funding support. Emergency prevention activities, whether for natural or man-made disasters and emergencies, are an important related function of relief and response and are possibly the most difficult element of any strategy.

167. From UNDP's perspective there are two elements in the challenge of prevention, preparedness and recovery. The first is to achieve an inter-institutional understanding that development activities never cease. The second is to undertake a strategic re-focusing of ongoing work in order to mitigate the impact of the crisis and simultaneously lay the foundation for recovery. Recent experience has highlighted key activities. They include emergency relief, disarmament and demobilization, the political process, resettlement and economic recovery. Further, it seems clear that these activities must be integrated and undertaken simultaneously.

168. The following section covers briefly (a) the emergency reduction and mitigation planning of each of the major United Nations system agencies and programmes, (b) their general and early-warning and early response capacity, and (c) the information systems they have available.

### A. Emergency reduction and mitigation

169. DHA, through its Disaster Reduction Division, is developing a strategic planning framework for disaster reduction. The planning framework, "Preparing for 2000," outlines strategic activities and approaches to be followed in the second half of the international Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.[85] It provides a basis for the disaster reduction work programmes of DHA, other United Nations organizations, and national and regional and international actors in disaster reduction.

170. UNDP has a primary role in addressing disaster mitigation and has supported a wide range of disaster prevention and preparedness activities related to natural and man-made disasters. Recognizing the direct relationship between emergencies and development processes, UNDP is expanding its support to country efforts to identify the level of vulnerability to man-made and natural disasters and formulate programmes and strategies for accelerated development and disaster prevention, mitigation and management, including early-warning systems.

171. UNESCO also contributes to disaster mitigation. It protects and rehabilitates cultural heritage aspects. Equally important, it assesses and mitigates natural and man-made disasters, particularly by identifying and evaluating the risks associated with natural hazards. It collects massive data and produces hazard maps divided into zones of risk. These data can come from continuous monitoring of seismic activity as well as analysing records of when and where earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other hazards have occurred in the past, in order to identify where they are likely to occur in the future. UNESCO has a three-pronged strategy to reduce the impact of natural hazards:

(a) Early-warning communication and information. Tsunamis, for example, travel at over 600 kmph and can produce 30 metre high waves thousands of kilometres from the epicentre of an earthquake in a matter of hours. But they cannot be seen from satellites or

aircraft and need sensitive monitoring equipment on the ground. The international cooperation of 23 nations belonging to the Pacific Tsunami Warning System, based in Hawaii, has made this monitoring possible. By linking evacuation plans to the warning system, disaster can be averted. Similarly, UNESCO, with UNEP, has identified 100 high risk volcanoes and is helping set up an international system of monitoring and rapid response. There are similar networks to monitor earthquakes and floods.

(b) Safer buildings. UNESCO promotes educational and technical services to member countries to make buildings resistant to earthquakes and windstorms, in particular schools and cultural buildings.

(c) Education of all levels of societies at risk. UNESCO regularly publishes educational material and helps train engineers and technicians.[86]

172. UNHCR, perhaps one of the few organizations with a prevention planning policy, does the following to help in the prevention and mitigation of disasters:

(a) Provides legal advice to Governments in central and eastern Europe, to make sure that national legislation is in accordance with international obligations;

(b) Assists Governments in building the institutional response capacity to cope with issues before they reach crisis proportions;

(c) Provides emergency management courses to Governments and NGOs;

(d) Maintains its own Emergency Response Teams, emergency stockpiles and negotiated stand-by arrangements, which enable the Office to establish an early and effective response in the field;

(e) Is also involved with IDPs in efforts to protect and assist victims at a much earlier stage of a crisis.

173. In order to increase awareness of the importance of disaster prevention, it would be useful to establish a system-wide policy which would systematically allocate a percentage of relief and rehabilitation funds to preventive measures. This would increase linkages between organizations involved in pre- and post- disaster activities and improve means for addressing disaster management as a coherent whole.

174. An important programme is the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) jointly managed and funded by DHA and UNDP.[87] The Programme aims at strengthening the capacities of all partners in emergency management by providing a framework for worldwide disaster management training. It has produced training materials in various languages and has run more than 50 workshops at the country and regional levels for resident coordinators and disaster management trainers.

175. Other than its workshops, which bring together national emergency and planning bodies, the United Nations system, NGOs and the donor community in-country, the DMTP initiates research to ensure that lessons learned can be passed on.[88] In its first phase, which began in mid 1990, the DMTP provided a total of US $250,000 to a large number of disaster-prone countries to establish a natural disaster strategy with the help of the United Nations and the UNDP Resident Representatives. In its second phase, since 1994, the objective of

the DMTP is to generate a critical mass of global exposure of disaster knowledge and skills with a view to reducing the impact of disasters worldwide. Its target is to implement DMTP in 100 countries, in a process running through to the end of the century and coinciding with the completion of the IDNDR.[89]

176. Similarly, what has informally been identified as the Complex Emergencies Training Initiative (CETI) took shape during an inter-agency consultation on humanitarian training in Geneva in June 1995 and is worth recommending. It is based on the suggested need for "a separate though connected sphere of activity (from DMTP) to focus exclusively on training needs in the coordination of field support in complex emergencies. This activity would be facilitated by DHA with the full involvement of all interested agencies."[90] It would involve the regrouping of DHA's various training efforts and a targeted approach to the training of DHA staff, with the involvement of the rest of the United Nations system.

177. The CETI initiative would draw fully on existing training capacities such as those of UNHCR and UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, for example, and build on shared common practices in a pragmatic manner. WFP, for example, has developed a training programme for both operational activities and emergency management and has issued an Emergency Handbook in two volumes which provides guidelines on policies, procedures, assessment and implementation. It is hoped that the CETI would help bridge gaps between policy makers and field users by further streamlining and clarifying policies. This CETI could also help in the training of personnel for the implementation of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.

## B. Early-warning and early response

178. The topic of an early-warning mechanism has been examined by an Interdepartmental Working Group on Early Warning. However, more work is needed to decide how best and to what extent to interrelate the different early-warning mechanisms already developed by individual agencies, and to have these early-warning indicators better address and mobilize effective response.[91] There was ample warning on the former Yugoslavia and Somalia for example, but neither appears to have benefited from any early response. Early-warning is a serious problem - as is early action. In this respect, DHA, DPA and DPKO recently agreed to establish a mechanism for joint analysis of early-warning information and planning of preventative action. [92] (See Chapter III. A. on the draft DHA-DPA-DPKO framework developed for this purpose.)

179. The basic objective of an early-warning mechanism is to provide accurate early-warning information and analysis to promote effective preventive and preparedness or response actions. This includes: (a) developing critical indicators which determine potential emergencies and (b) stimulating decision makers within the United Nations system and governing bodies to respond. Emergencies should be brought to the attention of the IASC, DPA and Secretary-General at an early stage, for example. Early-warning systems that cannot feed such information into policy and decision-making will have little impact on response. Without capacity there can be no response, and stand-by capacity is maximized by timely decision-making.

180. Successful monitoring, in general, has to also consider the vulnerability of people and communities. Several systems have been put in place in Africa, for example, to provide indicators to help governments, NGOs and United Nations system agencies answer to the needs and vulnerabilities of populations. This vulnerability is usually identified by various

indicators which project the way the given situation can develop and/or identify the onset of complex emergencies. The type of information needed to assess the humanitarian dimension of a crisis includes basic economic, social, political and military information, which is then blended with operational information related to such things as refugees, IDPs, food shortages, and basic health needs. Projections about how, when and on what scale the information can develop, for example, can be identified in the case of refugee flows, to show where displacement might occur.

**1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs**

181. The DHA-managed Humanitarian Early Warning System, better known as HEWS, relates and responds to the above concerns. This experimental and relational database was initiated and funded by the Japanese Government, and was recognized at the Halifax Summit in June 1995 for its potential to reach political decision makers and therein instigate action. HEWS includes 25 years of statistics, compiled into country profiles that address the departmental needs of DHA, DPKO and DPA. It generates early-warning signals which identity and monitor situations that warrant a higher level of concern; provides weekly reports which outline the situation in all countries; and provides follow-up reports that incorporate new information from field offices and changes in system indicators. The country profiles provide an assessment of trends which are expected to fulfill a decision-support function for prevention and preparedness.

182. The country profiles do not yet integrate field and NGO inputs, and rely primarily on published statistical data, HEWS, however, has considerable potential for further development into an inter-agency early-warning centre. But two years and US $800,000 into its development, there is question whether funding will continue or, whether HEWS will be left to wither. This type of experience, where the United Nations drops projects it initiates, should be avoided if attempts to meet institutional needs for humanitarian relief are to be considered credible and reliable.

183. Another source of consolidated early-warning information for complex emergencies includes the Geneva-based ACC Consultations on Early Warning of New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons which are held every four to six weeks and chaired by DHA. These meetings consider relevant analysis and information submitted by major United Nations agencies and other international organizations and NGOs. Each consultation produces an early-warning report which identifies incipient crises and recommends preventative measures to avert projected refugee flows. The recommendations are then submitted to the Secretary-General and other Executive Heads for action. Participants have also identified and adopted common consolidated indicators for enforced displacement. This list has been sent to various concerned offices for testing, in order to establish a consolidated list of indicators which would be shared among United Nations organizations, field offices and NGOs.

184. For sudden or natural disasters, DHA arrangements include the Operations Centre in Geneva. It is run by the Information Management Branch in close cooperation with substantive officers who are responsible for different regions. They screen information from the United States Geological Survey, the Service Meteorologique Suisse, radio amateurs, and other sources. The Centre is primarily concerned with coordination of relief efforts rather than early-warning actions. Direct links between this facility and the WFP proposed situation room - mentioned in the following section - are presently under study. The Centre is also already linked to the DPKO situation room, which helps monitor ongoing missions.

**2. Other United Nations system agencies and programmes**

185. UNHCR has created information databases and set up information systems to bolster its operational capacity in the areas of early-warning and response. It operates a number of information systems and databases relating to the registration, repatriation and resettlement of refugees. It also analyses country situations according to the potential size and time frame of the movements of persons and rates the country situations on a numeric scale. These databases are not linked to other United Nations Agencies but are used to provide basic statistics to UNHCR's operating partners such as WFP, IOM, ICRC, and NGOs. While UNHCR considers shared logistics and planning to be useful, it does not provide formal links on the movement of persons, in order not to breach the right of privacy. It makes available, on the Internet, however, the information it considers appropriate such as the country information database on population displacement which has been available since December 1994 and which has been offered to interested Member Agencies of the ACC Consultations on Early Warning.

186. FAO operates the Global Information and Early Warning System on food and agriculture (GIEWS), which was established in 1975 to provide a global food security monitoring system. It has developed a network for the collection, assessment, analysis and dissemination of current information on the global food situation to help identify food supply problems and trigger early action. Its geographically-referenced database includes satellite images, cropping zones, food supply/demand balances and other relevant information on agriculture, which are used by officers to enhance the analysis and interpretation of food supply difficulties. For early-warning purposes, GIEWS informally collaborates with all relevant United Nations agencies and over 60 NGOs. Plans are underway to make part of this database and its GIS interface available on the Internet within the context of ReliefWeb, (see section C). GIEWS reports are available on the Internet.

187. UNESCO is helping to enhance public awareness and preparedness covering natural disasters, and to create appropriate disaster warning and management systems such as the International Tsunami Information Centre in Hawaii. In the Caribbean, UNESCO sponsored a study on the role of the media in disaster management and the production of a related information kit for media professionals. A new inter-disciplinary approach to information systems in global risk and crisis management is being tested through a number of pilot projects in Latin America.

188. WHO has plans to develop an Epidemiological Early Warning System (EEWS) and develop a set of health indicators which can also be used in DHA's HEWS. These assessments, combined with the submissions of other participating agencies and offices, have been discussed at the ACC Consultations.

189. Effective early-warning mechanisms can lead to effective response if the agencies realize the urgency, have been authorized to respond, and have adequate resources and stand-by capacity. It is necessary to insure at least the following:

(a) Adequate funds in the stand-by emergency reserves of relief agencies;

(b) Flexible mechanisms to disburse emergency funds quickly;

(c) Stand-by capacity involving available human resources and ready access of relief items closer to the field, pre-identification of possible relief sites, and transport and other logistic information.

190. Ideally, for emergency information exchange to be a useful tool for action, the Inspector believes that a universal network and information centre is needed. HEWS is a good beginning in that direction and should be continued. As a key participant, UNHCR could also assist in the development and strengthening of practical and effective mechanisms for humanitarian early-warning. UNHCR's extended field presence enables the Office to gather early-warning data and closely monitor human rights and minority and nationality norms in the various countries. Substantive emergency information does not consist primarily of quantitative data nor of the most recent statistics available, but of qualitative assessment of the emergency situation itself, together with recommendations for action. This means that emergency managers should be considered both as users and providers of information.

191. The development indicators identified by UNDP also provide a broad information base on social and economic situations and the status of services provided through the public sector.[93] UNDP plans to build upon and revise the methodologies and data bases it currently employs in assessing the overall country environment and the range of vulnerability indicators which have an impact upon the human condition.

## C. Information Systems

192. The usefulness of any international early-warning system will also be determined by its technical capacity to instantly share information. Making sure that substantive information circulates as it should is one of the greatest challenges for any universal network.[94] The success of relief efforts relies as much on strategic communication between participants and decision-support at senior levels as it does on access to information. The limited capacity of current structures to collect, process and analyze early-warning information and develop recommendations for required action has been identified as a major constraint. Another area of concern is the lack of rapid information sharing and the incompatibility of hardware and software systems among participating agencies and offices. This is further hindered by regulatory restrictions in the use of telecommunications technologies and networks.

### 1. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs

193. There have been several attempts to develop information systems to overcome this lack of compatibility, such as the International Emergency Reduction, Readiness and Response Information System or IERRIS which cost US $0.5 million but was then abandoned. IERRIS, according to DHA, was designed to share information in relation to prevention and preparedness, and facilitate information management for response. Its objective was to ensure compatibility between different information systems and standardize approaches to such systems. This objective has now been achieved through technological progress and IERRIS is therefore considered obsolete.

194. The latest attempt to create a universal information network for emergency and humanitarian response is the ReliefWeb - used to be ReliefNet. ReliefWeb takes into account recent lessons learned about electronic systems. Its objective is to enhance decision-making within governmental agencies, international organizations and NGOs and improve the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance projects through (a) the timely exchange of operational data between participants and, (b) an increased flow of critical information

between Headquarters staff and field operations. These assumptions are based on the ability of participants in the field or at Headquarters to quickly assimilate strategic information from other agencies and enhance the effectiveness of relief activities, particularly in the preparedness and early-warning phases of an emergency.[95]

195. An international meeting of donors, organizations of the United Nations system and NGOs was convened by DHA in Geneva in June 1995 and indicated strong support for the project. An international Advisory Board will be set up to provide overall guidance to a Project Management Team to be created within DHA. The project is still in its experimental stage, but once it is launched, ReliefWeb hopes to help managers improve their emergency preparedness and respond to any type of humanitarian crisis. It is expected to provide answers to logistical questions such as food, equipment and medical supplies available for distribution in a given country at a given time and physical requirements to transport those supplies to a potential disaster site.[96]

196. As an interim measure pending the full development of ReliefWeb, DHA moved its United Nations International Emergency Information Network (UNIENET), which has become technologically obsolete, to a gopher site on the Internet: the Humanitarian Crisis Web or HCWEB. The HCWEB is the enlarged version of the UNIENET which was established by UNDRO in 1988 and operated by DHA since 1992. The HCWEB provides on-line general country information, such as maps and reports which cover donor countries, search and rescue teams, emergency response offices, emergency stockpiles, human rights reports, early-warning issues, natural disaster involvement reports, summaries of requirements to contributors, and other political, military, economic and disaster related information. Three additional parts are being developed, encompassing stockpiles of disaster relief items, disaster management expertise and military and civil defence assets. Almost all United Nations system organizations involved in emergency operations provide information to DHA for the HCWEB, including two umbrella organizations for NGOs: ICVA and InterAction.

197. DHA, in close collaboration with DPKO and others, has also created an extensive database on landmine operations, including technical information regarding mines and clearance techniques, country information, rosters of trained personnel, cost, legal aspects and other relevant information.

**2. Other United Nations system agencies**

198. UNHCR has VHF (very high frequency) networks similar to those used by police and army forces to establish field communications, as used in the case of Goma, the major Rwanda refugee camp. Other United Nations agencies and humanitarian bodies have had access to these networks. UNHCR also manages a common satellite-based telecommunications system (VSAT) which will be launched in 1996 for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. UNHCR also participates in initiatives such as ReliefWeb.

199. UNICEF is considering developing field level plans and monitoring formats for its activities, although it thinks that a common DHA-coordinated database would be an easier solution for system-wide reporting.

200. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) receives input form WFP which contributes information to and participates in the finalisation of the relevant

monthly bulletins. Joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply assessment missions are an important source of information on food supply and food aid requirements.

201. WFP also operates the International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS) on food aid flows and prepares vulnerability analysis and mapping data for early-warning. It has a new crisis operations room and produces a Weekly Emergency Telex Report covering all major emergencies. This telex is disseminated by electronic mail and facsimile and is in the United Nations International Computing Centre's Hunger Web and the Rwanda Crisis Web.

202. WHO operates a number of specific health-related information systems and includes databases on Global Health Situation and Projections Estimates; WHO Registry of Infectious Diseases; Malaria Information; AIDS Reporting; Health-for-all Indicators; and Food and Nutrition Indicators. Most of these are available on the Internet. WHO also provides several databases through the World Wide Web and the Gopher Server with information for example on Essential Drugs; Human Reproduction; Chemical Safety; Environmental Health; and Health Economics.

203. In conclusion, each agency has recognised the importance of having information systems which serve each of their interests. The challenge is to consolidate these into one central universal network which would serve each agency's purpose as well as allow for enhanced decision-making and planning for consolidated appeals and mobilization of relief efforts. Efforts must be made to ensure that accurate information is delivered in a timely manner to the right persons, especially during emergencies and from developing countries, and to overcome the lack of compatibility of systems between the different agencies.

## V. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

204. The needs arising from complex emergencies are so great at present that there is fierce competition among the United Nations humanitarian and specialized agencies and NGOs for an inadequate amount of resources. The financial capacity of each relief agency is dependent largely on voluntary donors and often on the political or media agenda.

205. The CERF has been an important solution to provide complementary funds for emergencies and to United Nations system operational agencies. It is designed as a cash-flow mechanism to ensure rapid and coordinated response of organizations of the United Nations system to requests for emergency assistance. It is used to make advances to operational organizations and entities of the system. These are reimbursed as a first charge against voluntary contributions received in response to Consolidated Appeals.[97]

206. Another consideration, in the opinion of the Inspector, is to encourage agencies not to launch parallel appeals to humanitarian relief if they are to have access to the Consolidated Appeal. The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) was envisaged as a mechanism to promote integrated needs assessments, greater prioritization, and to help mobilize financial support for humanitarian programmes.[98] Increasing agencies' participation in the CAP would help improve on the quality of consolidated appeals by decreasing agencies' alternative appeals and increasing the importance placed on consensus and realistic priorities for emergencies. In this way, donors would get to hear one single appeal, increase funding through the CAP, and possibly decrease their tendency to use bilateral-funded programmes. The follow-up with potential donors, on the other hand, can best be left to the appealing agencies and partners. In exceptional cases where agencies are required to act outside the Consolidated Appeals Process, this should systematically occur after consultation with DHA.

207. The suggestions mentioned assume that DHA is in the best position to manage these funds and should be allowed to do so. They also assume that consensus would be reached as to whether the funds would be managed from New York or from Geneva and thus avoid unnecessary confusion. Such confusion arose when the management of Geneva-based emergency trust funds and accounts (e.g. Iraq and the Non-Independent States) was transferred almost totally to New York without the necessary resources or staffing support.

208. A third suggestion is to increase the donor base for United Nations agencies relief funding, and to begin attracting funds from the private sector. DHA, like most United Nations agencies, has drawn its funding solely from the public sector. The money pledged voluntarily by donors comes from emergency as opposed to rehabilitation budget lines and is given on the understanding that it will be used for achieving objectives as set out in a given consolidated inter-agency appeal. Fund raising from the private sector requires a substantial investment of resources and the use of special fund-raising methods which do not fit the already established Consolidated Appeal Process. In other words, direct mail, special events, mass advertising and solicitations from private business entities would be required. This would necessitate a level of staff resources not currently available to DHA.

209. A funding dichotomy between relief and development should also be taken into account. As mentioned earlier, it has also been proposed that a window of an additional US $ 30 million be created within the CERF for quick action to support immediate recovery and transition activities undertaken by organizations of the United Nations system. UNDP, in

consultation with other partners of the United Nations system, and DHA, are expected to work out modalities for this new facility.

210. From UNDP's perspective, the issue of resource requirements and availability is at the heart of the dichotomy between relief and development. The emerging view is that emergency relief means saving lives and, in this context, humanitarian assistance is comprised of those actions directed at accomplishing this fundamental objective. The urgent and immediate interventions by the relief community are therefore aimed at a range of services including providing food to supplement diets, delivering water and providing sanitation, dispensing drugs and medicines to preventing epidemics, and furnishing shelter.

211. On the other hand, development means protecting and saving livelihoods, and constitutes a demand that must continue to be met even in the worst conditions of crisis. UNDP believes that pre-crisis development activities must be re-focused to address the consequences of crisis, in order to prevent further deterioration and to strengthen the foundations for reconciliation and recovery. These activities should aim at reviving and adapting indigenous systems of local and community management to maintain basic health, sanitation and other social services, thereby increasing the rate at which dislocated families return home to undertake productive endeavors. The provision of relief assistance should therefore maximize development impact by moving as quickly as possible to employment schemes and restored social services. All these actions should incorporate as much self-governance as is feasible under the circumstances. In this manner, relief efforts will strengthen and reinforce evolving systems of accountability, openness and public trust.

212. The following section covers in general (a) the financial resources and (b) the administrative procedures which affect the overall response capacity of the United Nations system.

## A. Financial resources

213. In 1994, about US $5 billion was spent on humanitarian assistance, with US $3 billion from United Nations system agencies and another US $2 billion by NGOs, IFRCS, ICRC and aid agencies of major donors. A separate budget finances peace-keeping, which now exceeds the combined total of all other System expenditures. The United Nations peace-keeping budget rose from about US $0.5 billion in 1990 to almost US $4 billion, or an eight times increase in over four years.[99] The collective effectiveness of agencies in undertaking relief operations is dependent on the availability of resources. If one of the major partners - including the coordination mechanism - is without adequate funding, this clearly jeopardizes a well-coordinated inter-agency strategy.

214. FAO receives contributions for emergency projects from governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies and from its Technical Cooperation Programme. The total was US $34.3 million in 1994. There is no flexibility in the use of funds allocated by donors for specific activities. FAO has recognised the need to establish an emergency revolving fund to meet immediate requirements, inter alia teams to assess the impact of calamity on the agricultural sector and to formulate interventions.[100]

215. Currently, UNDP emergency relief assistance is largely funded from Special Programme Resources (SPR), which are approved by the Executive Board over a five-year planning cycle for the purpose of disaster mitigation. All activities proposed for funding under SPR must have been fully discussed at the country level with the United Nations Disaster

Management Team. Requests for approval of SPR funds for specific activities are directed to UNDP Headquarters from the country offices, except in selected countries classified as highly vulnerable to sudden natural disasters. Approval authority for Emergency Phase Activities has been delegated to the UNDP Resident Representative.[101]

216. Two subcategories of the Special Programme Resources are available to meet immediate humanitarian assistance requirements. The first is for Emergency Phase Activities, and contains an average annual amount of US $1 million, for allocations of up to US $50,000 per country. These funds can be used for emergency-related coordination, support services for deployment of relief supplies, and for direct emergency assistance.[102]

217. The second subcategory is for the refugees, displaced persons and, returnees. It is funded at an average annual level of US $1.4 million. A maximum of US $50,000 per situation is available for emergency assistance to internally displaced persons to fill crucial gaps not met by other United Nations system resources and for activities oriented to needs assessment and project development pertaining to refugees and returnees. Funds for the coordination of assistance to displaced persons are limited to US $100,000 per displacement situation.[103]

218. The UNDP Executive Board has recently approved a revision to the above provisions by establishing an earmarking of 5 per cent of core resources (estimated at approximately $50 million annually) to enable a more vigorous response to countries in special circumstances. These resources primarily support country office efforts to address the challenges of preventive and curative development. UNDP recognizes that these activities must often be carried out in the midst of complex emergency and relief situations, frequently to protect past development assets during emergency relief operations and prepare a basis for future reconstruction and development. In addition to a range of other activities, this earmarking of resources will embrace the current SPR subcategories noted above. Guidelines for the allocation of these resources are presently under preparation. The UNDP Executive Board has also approved 1.7 per cent of core resources (approximately $20 million annually) for programme support to the Resident Coordinator/aid coordination. This earmarking will facilitate the role and range of services provided by the Resident Coordinator in strengthening inter-agency collaboration during all phases of an emergency.

219. UNHCR's assistance programmes are largely funded by voluntary contributions from governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals. For administrative costs, limited funds are obtained from the United Nations regular budget. UNHCR budgetary arrangements are generally flexible, are not earmarked to regions or commodities, and have been increasing in recent years.

220. UNHCR has three possibilities for obtaining funds for humanitarian situations. The Emergency Fund now stands at US $25 million, from which up to US $8 million can be allocated to any one emergency during a year. If this fund is depleted, UNHCR can draw temporarily up to US $8 million from its Working Capital and Guaranteed Fund, established at US $50 million. The Programme Reserve, currently set at 10 per cent of annual programmed activities, can also be used to respond to needs resulting from new influxes of refugees. Further, UNHCR is authorised to use a General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation, currently set at US $20 million, to promote or initiate voluntary repatriation activities whenever the possibility arises.[104]

221. UNICEF spends close to US $1 billion a year in total. More than two-thirds of its income comes from voluntary contributions from the government and private sector. The remaining funds are obtained through the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals and advances from the CERF - for cash flow for initial responses to Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals. UNICEF has made the largest use of CERF advances in the United Nations system. (As of October 1994, 40 per cent of the US $103.4 million advanced from CERF went to UNICEF.) It uses its National Committees for fast fund-raising for humanitarian assistance, and has an internal Emergency Programme Fund for emergencies which are not covered by the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals.

222. UNRWA emergency assistance is provided on an ad hoc basis, for example through the Agency's Extraordinary Measures for Lebanon and the Occupied Territories (EMLOT). UNRWA receives funding from voluntary contributions by donors and undertakes its fund-raising directly. There is an annual Pledging conference on UNRWA at the United Nations in New York to which invitations are issued by the Secretary-General.

223. WFP relies on voluntary contributions for its funding of relief operations and principally on the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), which has an annual target of 500,000 tons. Once that is depleted, it has two subsets of its regular WFP budget. One is for protracted refugee and displaced persons relief operations. The other is the Cash Immediate Response Account (IRA), which allows for early interventions when an emergency occurs, particularly for road repairs and airlifts, and often comes from pledges for specific emergencies.[105] Advance pledges to the IEFR, however, was low in 1994. IRA too has been largely under subscribed and has not functioned as planned.

224. WHO has an Emergency Revolving Fund of US $900,000 in unearmarked resources for immediate emergency response for each biennium. The fund is divided into a US $400,000 replenishable component and US $500,000 allocation. WHO must rely on resources mobilised through consolidated appeals, or the limited amounts available through regional offices, for its response to urgent emergency requirements.[106]

225. There are also fundamental restrictions and gaps in funding for disaster reduction. Voluntary contributions for emergency funds are often earmarked for specific emergencies and not for pre-disaster planning or projects, for example. DHA has no subdivision for pre-disaster work in its budget. Its annual regular budget allocation of US $600,000 is for immediate relief assistance.

226. UNDP is a source of funding for DHA's disaster reduction activities at the country level, although DHA has shown concern for the mechanism through which UNDP provides funding to DHA-related projects. DHA has not been accorded the status of an executing agency in UNDP terms, and arrangements have been made through the United Nations Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS). Hence, a clear operational understanding between UNDP, DDSMS and DHA seems necessary.

227. More systematic donor consultation for disaster reduction programmes and activities would increase the level of funding available for implementation and improve DHA's disaster reduction capacity. A bi-annual donor consultation in combination with a round table on disaster reduction with other United Nations Agencies may be one way. Maintaining close contact with DHA field operations and disseminating relevant information to donors would be another way to mobilise more funds.

228. At present, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) Secretariat is not part of the regular budget of DHA. The IDNDR depends on external donor contributions and staff seconded from other United Nations bodies to administer its functions. Some of these contributions are made to DHA, while others go directly to the countries involved or come in the form of cost-sharing agreements with other donors. This demonstrates, among other things, the lower priority accorded by the international community towards disaster reduction compared to other activities. The Secretariat has been caught in a vicious cycle: low funding - lack of proper capacity for action - weaker results - low funding.

## B. Administrative procedures

229. The capacity of DHA to react quickly and effectively in cases of emergency has been a matter of concern to Member States. Even with the best will of those involved, existing rules and procedures have caused inordinate delays in the deployment of DHA resources to the field to enable it to play its coordinating humanitarian role in a timely and effective manner.

230. United Nations Financicl and Administrative Rules and Regulations concerning all of DHA activities should be revised and adapted to better respond to its emergency requirements. Areas which need to be addressed for the entire range of DHA activities include: staffing, recruitment, contractual arrangements, rapid deployment, waiver of programme support in cases of non-reimbursable loans; procurement of equipment for field coordination activities; and provision of relief supplies and materials, including operation of the Pisa Warehouse and chartering of aircraft for relief distribution and receipt and transfer of funds.

231. Stockpiles. The present administrative arrangements are not suitable for emergency situations. The Pisa Warehouse, managed by DHA, is expected to be ready in cases of emergencies for dispatching goods at very short notice as well as at assembling cargo from various origins/donors for delivery to specific destinations. Speed in transporting and delivering supplies is a life-saving element which means that suitable transportation is required and necessary funds are mobilised for any one launch. Because of the emergency nature, 90 per cent of the operations out of Pisa are carried out by plane.

232. For all operational issues linked to Pisa, mainly procurement of relief items for the stocks and transport arrangements by road/sea/air, DHA has to rely on the Purchase, Transportation and Internal Services Section of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). This is not a feasible approach by any means. DHA will not be able to keep up the cooperation with other United Nations Agencies through Pisa if they are unable to offer them first-class service. This also throws a shadow on DHA's relationship with Pisa's main donor, Italy, which might jeopardise further contributions and compromise the future of the warehouse.[107]

233. DHA has also been operating a Stockpile Project in Mozambique for the distribution of non-food items for natural disaster or civil strife victims since 1987. The project's yearly turnover has been approximately US $2 million, most of which represents the procurement of non-food items such as blankets, kitchen sets, and clothing.

234. Since 1992, because the internal auditors insisted that DHA adhere to the United Nations Financial Rules and Regulations, a waiting period of a minimum six months may

elapse before the clearances are made. There have also been cases where the stockpile warehouses have been empty and DHA has been unable to meet its objectives.

235. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182, special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the United Nations to enable all organizations to quickly disburse emergency funds and to procure emergency supplies and equipment, and recruit emergency staff. General Assembly Resolutions 37/144, 39/207 and 45/221 already requested that United Nations procurement procedures be modified, but this has not yet been implemented.

236. Donor Contributions. Procedural difficulties encountered with procurement of relief items have limited the contributions that DHA can accept from donors and voluntary contributors. The potential contribution to the DHA Stockpile Project in Mozambique from the European Union (EU) is one example. It was turned down, simply due to the incompatibility of EU and United Nations rules and regulations.[108] The EU has also expressed interest in funding the DHA Project for the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) with a contribution of about ECU 500,000 corresponding to approximately 50 per cent of the project budget for 1995. While the January 1995 agreement with the European Communities has allowed certain forms of auditor access and financial information, it should be underlined, that United Nations humanitarian assistance cannot afford this type of financial rigidity for such important budgets.

237. Some donors also require the signing of specific agreements concerning their contribution for emergency operations. To process these, the DHA Relief and Coordination Branch in Geneva can wait for more than one month before clearance from the Senior Legal Advisor's office at UNOG is obtained. Then it must wait for clearance from the Office of Legal Affairs in New York in most instances. DHA in Geneva has little or no approval authority for such matters.

238. It has been suggested that the United Nations rules and regulations should (a) allow DHA to follow donor formats such as those of the European Union and (b) delegate much more signing authority to DHA officials.

239. Mobilization of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) teams. UNDAC team members have to leave within hours to a disaster-affected country, accompanied by a communications expert and or with mobile satellite telecommunications equipment. There is a special mission fund, made up entirely of voluntary contributions, to cover in-country expenditure of UNDAC teams. Travel and per diem costs for UNDAC members provided by Governments are advanced by DHA from the mission fund, which is later replenished by the Governments concerned. While on mission, UNDAC team members have the status of United Nations experts on mission.

240. MCDA officers are identified and seconded at very short notice. Speedy and efficient procedures are needed to put them under the United Nations umbrella, according to the provisions in the Oslo Guidelines.[109] There is also a need for prompt administrative procedures to issue collective contracts to national teams being deployed in emergency operations. One suggestion to accelerate the process would be the processing of related documents in the format presented by the donor, rather than the United Nations format, and a more flexible application of United Nations staff and financial rules and regulations.

241. There are also delays and difficulties in obtaining permission for the withdrawal of cash particularly outside working hours and to team members who are going to areas where travelers cheques are inappropriate. Similar difficulties are faced with medical clearances, particularly for malaria prophylaxis and equipment for relief missions, if departure is outside working hours.

242. The consultants who are part of the UNDAC team are hired on a pro bono basis. So far, DHA has had to conclude a contract with each one of them for each mission. Requests from the UNOG Personnel Division for one-year contracts have been in vain. The security of team members and health insurance have also been problematic. UNDAC team members have been unable to get insurance against all causes of death, and have not always been briefed on risks related to missions in dangerous areas. Improvements needed include: speeding contractual arrangements; increasing the pro bono durations; allowing team members full-option health insurance; making obligatory minimum training requirements for all stand-by team members; and providing all with protection gear, active and/or passive defence systems.

## VI. LESSONS LEARNED

243. Each United Nations system agency and programme should have its own system for institutionalising lessons learned. These systems, should then be shared system-wide through common training programmes, inter-agency collaborative mechanisms, emergency guidelines, and publications so that other entities benefit fully. Institutionalising lessons learned is a very important element which is particularly lacking at present for large scale complex emergencies. Recommendations to document and capture lessons learned include:

(a) The Disaster Management Team country-level coordinating committee should prepare a brief summary of lessons learned at the end of each emergency operation and once a year in the case of protracted operations.

(b) The Inter-Agency Support Unit working under the guidance of the (IASC-WG) should prepare similar summaries focusing on issues from the international perspective, and consolidate them with lessons from the country-level.

(c) The IASC-WG should review these lessons twice a year and agree upon follow-up actions and recommendations to the IASC. Lessons from major individual operations would be considered on an ad hoc basis at any time.

(d) Major lessons and actions taken should be reflected in the annual report of the USG of DHA to ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

244. The following section identifies operational frameworks which have already been qualified as effective, and the relief to development continuum which is often forgotten. The agencies' strengths, while almost obvious, are listed as necessary qualifiers and examples to include within any operational framework.

### A. Effective operational frameworks

245. In documenting and sharing lessons-learned, effective relief operation frameworks should be identified to improve the management and pre-planning process for emergency relief, particularly in the field. The following guidelines and examples of effective frameworks and planning should and could be used for most if not all types of emergency relief and assistance:

246. Rwanda. The massive influx of over 2 million refugees from Rwanda into four neighbouring countries over a period of three months in 1994 posed unprecedented challenges, in particular for UNHCR. All available staffing, contingency stocks and financial resources from HCR's Emergency Fund, the CERF, and early donor contributions could not prevent major crises, particularly in the Ngara district in Tanzania and in the Goma area. As outlined in the DHA study on Rwanda, however, this operation is seen, at least initially, as largely successful despite very difficult circumstances and with very limited resources. Achievements include:

(a) Establishing an overall strategic plan and framework to facilitate the work of relief-agencies.

(b) Establishing the Integrated Operation Centre, which is a key element in the planning and implementation of a new programme recently being launched for IDPs.

(c) Dispatching an early DHA-led humanitarian team onsite to set up the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office which became the focal point for the coordination of humanitarian efforts in Rwanda.

(d) Establishing working-level coordination with Headquarters' peace-keeping and political departments, and the Rwanda Task Force to ensure the overall coordination of activities of the United Nations system.

(e) Distributing local agricultural inputs during the emergency phase to maintain domestic food production capacity and answering to the most urgent needs of the refugee and displaced populations.

(f) Issuing regular situation reports and humanitarian situation reports to headquarters and the international community.

247. Ngara, Tanzania. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies identified the following reasons for the success in Ngara:

(a)There was a strong operational presence in Ngara before the disaster and early access to basic logistical and support equipment and supplies.

(b) Many experienced people were available in the region to start up the operation.

(c) A telecommunications system was put in place quickly.

(d) A regional delegation provided purchasing and transport support and the operational support unit had an airplane at its disposal to fly in personnel and small quantities of vital supplies.

(e) Information officers were on hand to ensure good media coverage and to send reports rapidly to Headquarters, donors, and the international community.

(f) The desk officer in charge at the Geneva secretariat was reinforced in order to ensure effective command, control and communication.

(g) There was strong support from technical departments for back-up in the field and at Headquarters.

(h) Cooperative and experienced national societies provided specialised services, supplies and personnel when requested.

(I) Donors gave strong support and funds were disbursed rapidly.[110]

248. Mozambique. A Dutch evaluation report praised the UNHCR operation in Mozambique for its excellent and rapid response. It urged UNHCR to design an effective financial information system for donors, and UNHCR local management to share its experience with the broader development community. It also recommended that UNHCR reflect on its successful experience, particularly in Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), and consolidate that experience in handbooks for local community intervention. The following guidelines, according to the Dutch evalutation report, provide an example of UNHCR's success:

(a) UNHCR operated an independent programme under the framework established by the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Operation in Mozambique (UNOHAC) and as support for NAR (Nucleo de Apoio aos Refugiados or Refugee Support Council). It managed significant coordination with other multilateral agencies, particularly with the World Bank, WFP and UNDP. Its role was the voluntary repatriation and resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, which meant the movement from asylum countries and coordinated rehabilitation of settlement areas such as the building of primary schools.

(b) For free repatriation, UNHCR sought tripartite agreements between the Government of Mozambique, the individual state offering asylum and UNHCR. For rehabilitation, tripartite agreements were made between NAR representing the Government of Mozambique, the implementing partner (NGO or implementing ministry), and UNHCR.

(c) Quadripartite agreements between UNHCR, WFP, the Mozambican Government, and NGOs assured the distribution of relief food supplies to returnees. Planning the rehabilitation within Mozambique also required approval from the Provincial Planning Council. Capacity building in logistics and transport, physical planning and the implementing capacity of UNHCR partners were necessary conditions for resettlement. UNHCR also had the responsibility to negotiate requirements to establish permanent settlements.

(d) The movement of refugees was organized in phases as was an information campaign on registration and mine awareness prior to departure. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and specific programmes for food relief distribution, transport, non-food survival provisions, seeds and tools, water supply and sanitation and physical safety of groups from the danger of mines accelerated the transition from relief to rehabilitation.

(e) In the repatriation phase up to September 1994, UNHCR achieved 87 per cent of its planned repatriation. In the rehabilitation phase, some 96 clinics, 287 schools, 77 wells, and 196 boreholes and over 1600 kilometres of road had been rehabilitated or constructed. Some 177,000 tool kits and 186,000 seed kits had been distributed to help farming, and more than 500 QIPs were in action.[111]

249. A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis was made by the Dutch evaluation team covering the Mozambique relief operation to identify successful frameworks for operations. The strengths and weaknesses mainly refer to internal factors, and the opportunities and threats refer to external factors.

**B. <u>The relief-to-development continuum and agencies' strengths</u>**

250. In order to respond to the challenge of recovery, certain initiatives must be implemented to stabilize the social, economic and political environment. Such initiatives include supporting the creation of participatory, decentralized local, community and national administrative structures; encouraging domestic production and reducing dependency on emergency food; reviving the informal sector and renewing productive endeavor and entrepreneurial activity; encouraging independent action and reducing the demand for government jobs; restoring water, health and sanitation systems; reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening coping capacities; and assisting community efforts to continue basic education; and providing productive outlets for youth.

251. All of these actions are necessary to provide opportunities for resettlement of uprooted families and re-integration of combatants. The provision of emergency assistance

must, at the earliest possible time, take account of and attempt to strengthen community capacity in ways that re-build governance and self-reliance through participation, openness and transparency.

252. In order to facilitate recovery efforts, upon the emergence of a "transitional authority", UNDP would encourage the arrangement of a well-researched and well-timed consultation between the transitional authority with the full range of civic, political and other interests on the one hand, and the international partners that include bilateral and multilateral donors, regional interests, the United Nations system and representatives of concerned relief and development agencies on the other.

253. UNDP's proposed consultation would examine two documents regarding a national framework for recovery and a framework for international support for national efforts. The national framework would have identified the domestic human, physical and other resources necessary to drive the recovery process. The international framework of support would include an assessment and analysis of the requirements for a resumption of activities in the formal and informal economies. It would assess the role of government operations, the core ministries and public companies. It would identify the maximum available external resources that could be committed to support domestic recovery efforts as well as specify the conditions that would apply to the utilization of the external resources. The fusing of the two frameworks into a strategy for rehabilitation and recovery would provide for the protection of humanitarian gains and implementation of a recovery programme based on transparency, accountability and sustainability. UNDP envisages that this consultation would result in a firm strategic agreement on the way forward.

254. Whenever possible, UNHCR believes that humanitarian assistance should encourage the early resumption of community-based development ventures for social and economic recovery by affected populations. The mere fact that UNHCR reintegrates returning refugees to their countries of origin brings its humanitarian assistance close to development programmes, and into partnership with developmental actors such as UNDP, bilateral donors and, in some instances, the World Bank. Humanitarian assistance has to facilitate the developmental reintegration of affected populations and development activities have to address the people-centered concerns and aspirations.

255. Operationally, UNHCR addresses humanitarian needs in the community primarily through area-based quick impact projects aimed at supporting a reconciliation process in post-conflict societies and bringing humanitarian concerns into a development perspective. UNHCR has a Policy and Methodological Framework developed within the Office to this effect, which includes efforts to link up operationally with UNDP and other United Nations agencies and other bilateral partners. UNHCR considers its comparative advantage to be in refugee protection and assistance, its large field presence, and its experience in large scale assistance operations.

256. FAO sees its strength in its early-warning of food shortages, in the assessment of food and agricultural relief/rehabilitation needs, and in implementing agricultural relief and rehabilitation programmes in affected countries.

257. UNICEF is engaged in both relief and development programmes. In a regular development programme, the needs are assessed, then strategies to meet those needs are effected in the short and long term to cover the development portion of the continuum. In emergencies, this process is modified to cover early-warning and ways to mitigate or reverse

the emergency's impact. When an emergency strikes, resources for the country programme are diverted to address the immediate relief needs and extra funds are raised if necessary. The UNICEF country programme returns to a development mode once the emergency enters the recovery phase.

258. UNICEF's best field contribution has been its long-term presence and in-country knowledge, in the context of both emergency and development, with special emphasis on the vital needs of children. It also has long-term experience with host government officials, community leaders and local and international NGOs. UNICEF does best in off-shore and local procurement and delivery of substantial supply inputs, training of counterparts to build national and community capacity, and advocacy for the rights of children. UNICEF has a global warehouse facility in Copenhagen which contains one of the largest stockpiles of emergency relief and other supplies in the world and can rapidly ship items by air or surface.

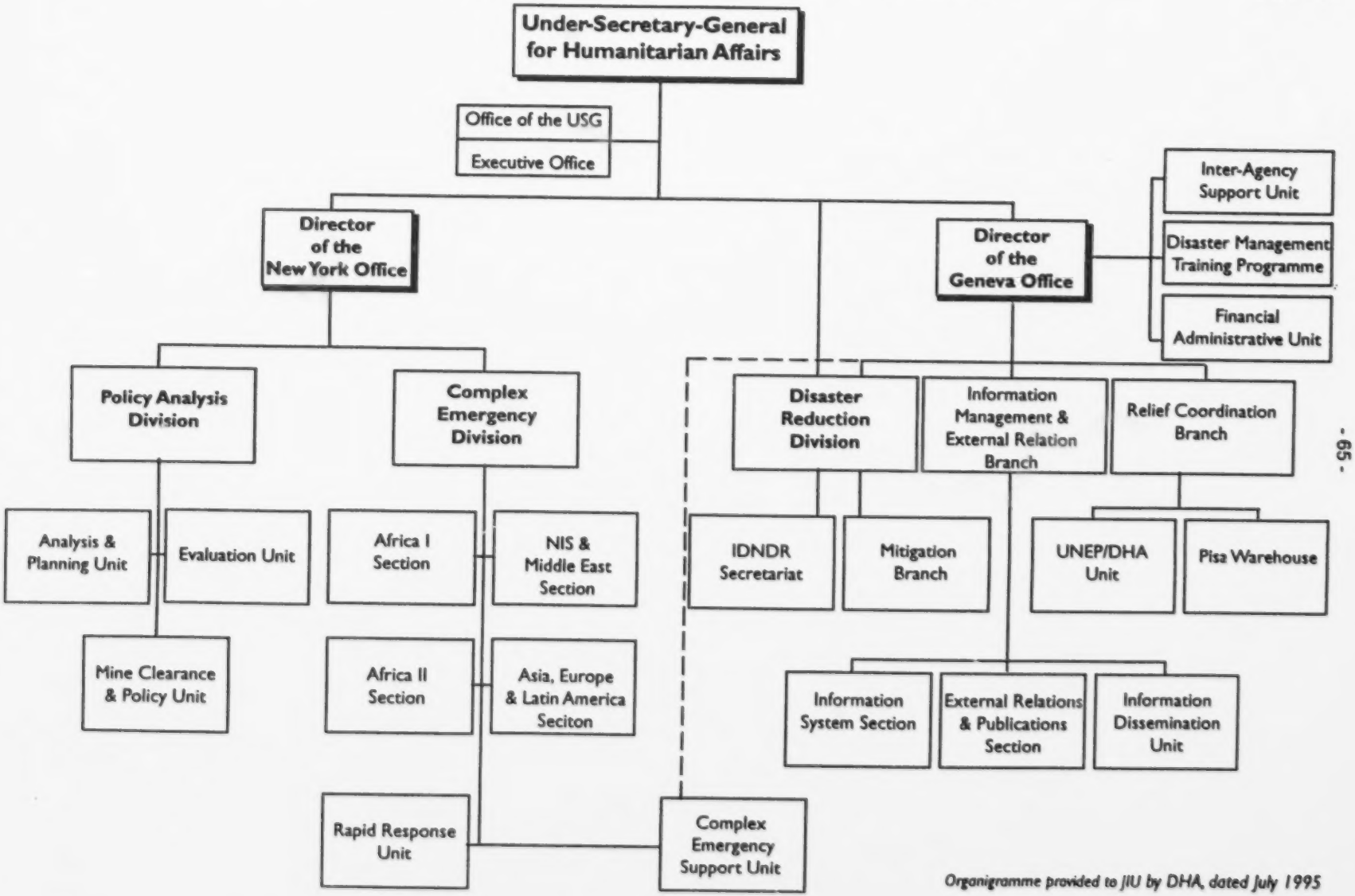
259. WFP sees itself fitting throughout the relief to development continuum. It pays particular attention to the use of "food for work" programmes and vulnerable group feeding at the earliest possible stage in relief interventions. Its planning of relief interventions, including post-civil war strife, is increasingly being undertaken within a development perspective, and development projects are being more closely linked with relief activities.

260. UNRWA's regular programmes respond to the needs of refugees for essential education, health, and relief and social services which the Agency provides on a governmental basis. Combined with these regular programmes, UNRWA's developmental and other special initiatives help contribute to social stability and prepare the refugee population for the time when international assistance to them is no longer needed. Four generations of Palestinian refugees have been given elementary and preparatory schooling, vocational training, medical care and relief assistance. UNRWA's infrastructure and services in elementary and preparatory education, vocational training, primary health care and social services can be classed as development. UNRWA also has income-generation, job-creation programmes, and poverty alleviation programmes.

261. Finally, the stand-by capacity and preparedness of the United Nations system for the provision of humanitarian assistance, in general, is dependent on many variables, which are not unilateral or uniform. The challenge here is for DHA to identify the strengths and stand-by capacity of all the operational agencies and facilitate the use of their expertise in functions which fit the relief-to-rehabilitation continuum. Each major operational agency in the field has had enough experience to handle most relief functions. Effective coordination comes into play to avoid loss of funds and duplication of functions. Such coordination provides the rapid support services necessary to bridge gaps and allow all the partners to function in maximum harmony.

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS ORGANIGRAMME

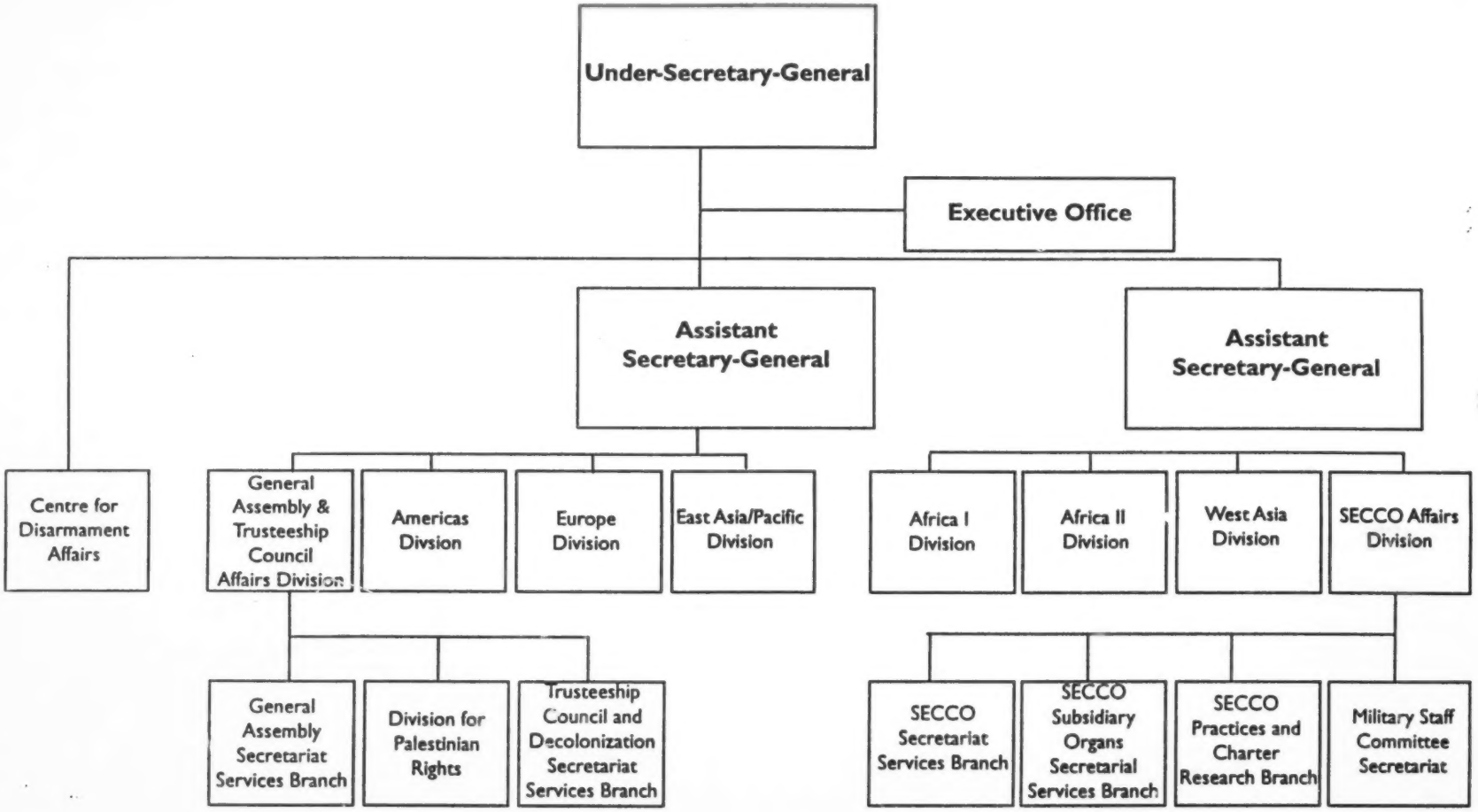
ANNEX I




*Organigramme provided to JIU by DHA, dated July 1995*

## DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS ORGANIGRAMME

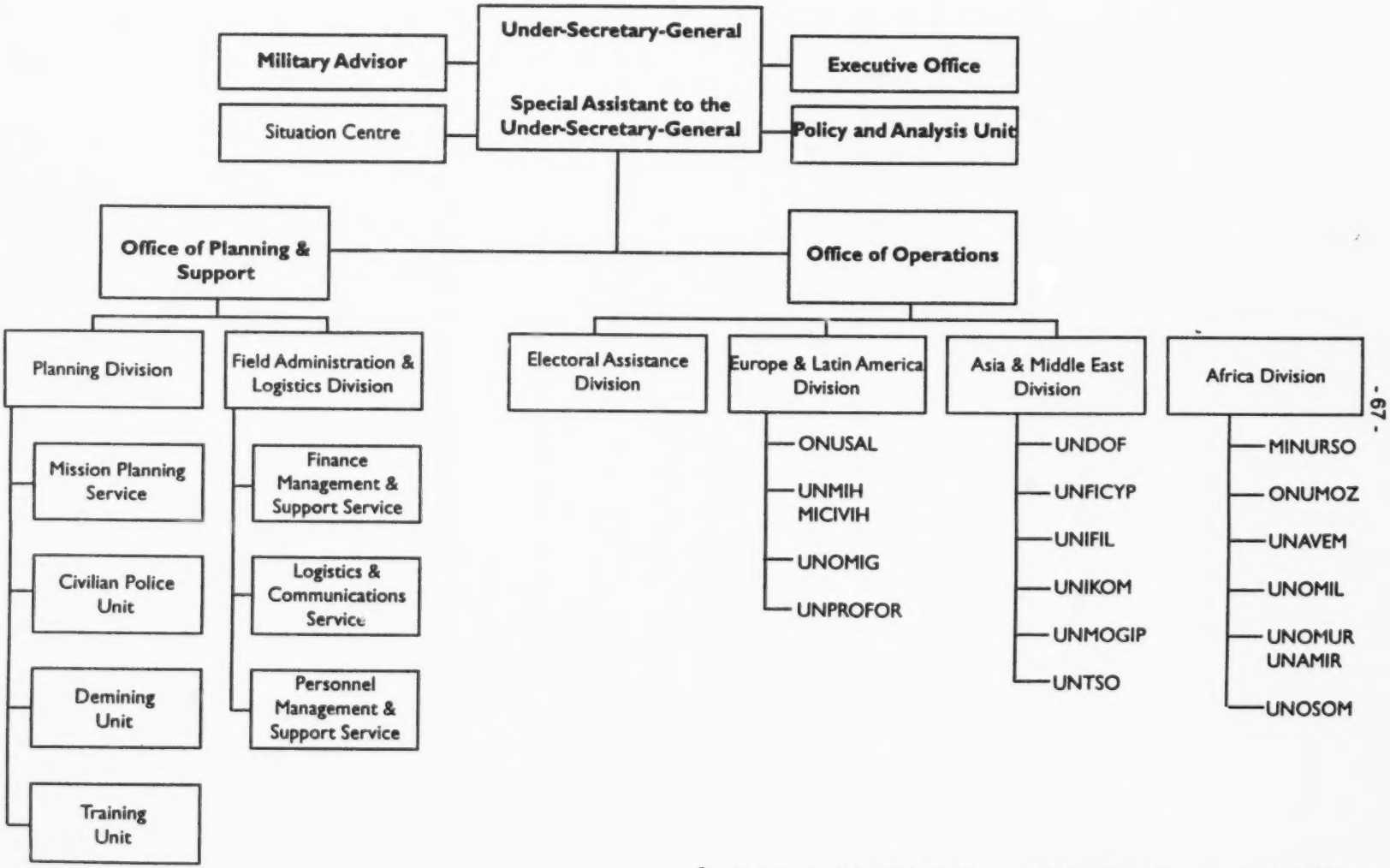
ANNEX II




*Organigramme provided to JIU by the Department of Political Affairs, dated April 1994*

## DEPARTMENT OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS ORGANIGRAMME

**ANNEX III**




*Organigramme provided to JIU by the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations, dated April 1994*

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